

THE PLEASANT LAND  
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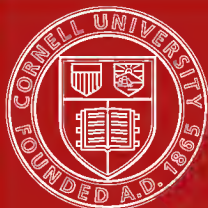
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## THE PLEASANT LAND OF FRANCE



# THE PLEASANT LAND OF FRANCE

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## P R E F A C E

ONLY two of the Essays in this volume refer to political discussions of the day. The essay on French Farming, written in 1887, describes the position of agriculture before the establishment of the Méline tariff in 1892. It may therefore serve as a starting-point for comparisons with existing conditions. For this reason it has been left practically untouched. It was written at a crisis when great changes seemed imminent in British farming. But in this country matters moved more slowly than was expected. Now, however, as in 1887, French experience may be useful in sobering extravagant expectations, and in preparing the country for that increased intervention by the State which necessarily accompanies the establishment of small owners or small tenants.

The third essay tells the story, little known in this country, of boycotting and other forms of agrarian outrage in France. The present condition of Ireland gives the history an interest which is unfortunately living.

The other essays deal with social, literary, or historical subjects, which touch on no political

disputes. As the title of the essay on *Some Modern French Poets* indicates, the choice is arbitrary, and no attempt is made to trace the modern history of French poetry. The essay includes some verse translations. Madame Duclaux, an English poetess and mistress of both languages, might succeed in rendering French poems into English poetry. The versions contained in these pages are less ambitious in their aim.

In France I have spent many of the happiest days of my life. To her pleasant land I owe a lasting debt of gratitude. If anything contained in these pages helps to disperse a single national prejudice, or to place any features in the genius and character of our neighbours in a fairer light, their object will have been gained.

I have to thank the Editors of the *Quarterly*, *Edinburgh*, *Nineteenth Century* and *Contemporary Reviews* for their permission to republish such portions of these essays as have been previously published in their pages. My thanks are also due to Mr. E. H. Coleridge, Mr. G. H. Holden and the Rev. Harold Watts for help in the correction of the proofs. To Mr. Holden I am indebted for the preparation of the Index.

ROWLAND E. PROTHERO.

*January 30, 1908.*

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## ROSES OF JERICHO: A DAY IN PROVINCIAL FRANCE

A ROSE of Jericho resembles at first sight a bunch of withered roots ; but plunged in boiling water it expands, unfolds and regains its former shape. Our memories are, in a sense, roses of Jericho. They seem to be dead ; but a sound, or smell, or sight, warms their dried-up fibres into a sudden renewal of life, and re-creates, in all their freshness, hours of our past experiences.

Every winter, thousands of English travellers rush through provincial France on their way to the Riviera, without bestowing a thought on the millions of lives which are being spent in the little towns and villages through which they are carried in the night express. The very names of the stations are unknown to them ; except from a momentary blaze of confused light and the increased roar of the train, they are even unaware of their existence. If any chain of association is aroused by what they see, it is generally one which, by contrast or comparison, carries them back to their own homes. Arrived at their destination, surrounded by their fellow-countrymen, occupied with their imported amusements, they have often neither the time nor the wish to study the natives

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of the country in which they are guests. Such a study cannot be pursued in company ; it is necessarily solitary ; it does not lend itself to the excitement of competition ; it is unaccompanied by the delightful thrill of danger ; it is not an athletic exercise ; still less is it a stepping-stone to London society.

The result is, perhaps, in some respects to be regretted. We know next to nothing of our nearest neighbours, for it is in the quiet of the provinces, rather than in the parade and glitter of cosmopolitan Paris, that the heart of the French nation is beating, and that the best aspects of the national character are presented. Satisfied, as is only natural, that the Englishman is the ideal type of humanity, we are apt to decide that a Frenchman is inferior to ourselves because he is deficient in certain qualities which we prize. We do not consider whether our criticism is well founded, or prejudiced, or based on traditions which never had, or long ago have lost, any justification. We are, in fact, so keenly alive to his defects that we are blind to the many points in which he is our superior, and which ought to modify our judgment. We regard him, for example, as wanting in manliness, in stability, in reserve and self-restraint. We condemn his taste in neckties, despise his boots, and suspect that he wears white lining to his trousers. We laugh at his sporting achievements, and believe that he regards a meet as something between a picnic and a review, or

shoots only for the sake of the noise and the society. The Frenchman, on what appear to him equally good grounds, feels the same contempt for us. The result was that, at the end of the nineteenth century, the two nations had drifted further apart in their sympathies than they ever were in the previous century, when, though constantly at war, they understood each other better.

To the traveller who knows and loves rural France, such a journey as we have spoken of is at least different. It has one pleasure to compensate the discomfort—that of retrospect. Every detail awakens some recollection or association. Now it is a turn in the limbs of a tree, standing out dark against the horizon on the summit of a copse-clad hill; now it is a farmstead, with its high-roofed grange, its sharp-pointed turret, its pigeon-cote, and one window red with the lamp of a lonely watcher. Sometimes it is the short, sharp yap of a sheep-dog, or a snatch of song from a group of belated countryfolk returning from market—sounds that are the next moment lost in the rattle of the already distant train. Faster than the hurrying express speeds the memory, recalling scenes that are as disconnected as the visions of a dream, but yet seem to group themselves round some provincial town or upland village.

Alight at one of these obscure stations, and make your way to the little town which it serves. It matters little for the purpose where the town

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may be situated, provided that it is far enough away from bustling centres of trade to have escaped some of the conventionalities that follow in the wake of material progress. It is best to reach it by an omnibus, if not a *diligence*; for, though the distance be not greater than five miles, the delays, the fréquent halts, the dust, the self-importance of the driver, the clatter of the arrival, and the interest with which the coming of the vehicle is expected by the natives, all create the impression that thirty times that space divides the journey's end from the starting-point.

The town must have seen better days, but, though decayed, it should not be entirely dead; it should rather be the centre of local life, the seat of a market, the *chef-lieu* of the *arrondissement*. It has not yet adapted itself to the fashion of the day; it has no bald, boulevarded, Parisianised streets, wide, straight, and long as a day without bread, in which the traveller is frozen by the wintry wind or grilled by the summer sun. It has bits of old ramparts shaded with plane trees, and labyrinths of lanes engineered on the mediæval principle—dear alike to statesmen and architects—that one good or bad turn deserves another. It has, in fact, an abundance of corners and crevices, in which may grow the flowers and the weeds of the past.

The very name of the hotel at which the traveller alights will help to foster the illusion that he has put not only miles, but centuries, between himself and his ordinary surroundings. Its sign, *de la*



*Haute Mère Dieu* or *de l'Image*, carries him back to the days when men relied for safety in their journeys rather on the hand of an unseen Protector than on the latest sanitary patent of Jennings. So, too, the names of the streets serve to strengthen the same impression. Here he can sip honey with the *Bourdon blanc*, caper with the *Chèvres qui dansent*, caracole on his destrier by the side of the *Quatre fils d'Aymon*, hunt Huguenots in the *rue des Renards*, or make the best of both worlds with the *Chapeaux Violettes*. The houses that rise on either side of these quaintly named and tortuous streets are in keeping with the old-world atmosphere. They belong to every age and every style. Here is one with high-pitched roof and timbered front, its three stories jutting out one above the other like an inverted staircase. Another, decorated with the broken escutcheon of some noble family, fascinates the passer-by with the grotesque figures, into which its joists are carved, or that grimace from the gable-ends. On the door of a third, huge nails trace mysterious hieroglyphs, some Protestant's confession of faith or some Leaguer's curse on Henri Quatre. A fourth, of less ambitious type, bears upon its front the symbols of a burgher's *noblesse de la cloche*. A fifth, standing back a few paces from the street, with a stone-paved courtyard, where pigeons are wooing with all the formal courtesies of Sir Charles Grandison, has an iron gateway, worked in the style of Louis the Fifteenth, with marvellous

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interlaced branches, the masterpiece of some unknown Jean Lamour.

There are but few windows in these narrow streets through which the passer-by can peer ; probably also but few interiors, even if he could see them, would repay his curiosity by presenting any characteristic features. The furniture is modern, and gives no clue to the habits or tastes of the owners, past or present. Crimson plush and gilding are as omnipresent as once were black horsehair and mahogany in this country. At the most a few crudely coloured prints from Épinal, in staring red and blue, suggest the churchwoman. But more rarely the style is distinctive. Here, for example, is a house which must once have belonged to a good citizen who prospered under the First Empire, and bequeathed to careful heirs the alabaster clock, the pier-glass set in its frame of fluted columns, the lyre-backed chairs, and the sofa with its arms adorned with brazen heads of rams or sphinxes. Here, rarer still, is another in the style of the eighteenth century ; the walls are wainscoted with varnished walnut-wood, with the panels decorated with scenes of the chase, or of Arcadia ; in a corner stands a bed of painted wood ; on the chimney-piece groups of *faïence de Lunéville* represent the four elements or the four seasons ; from the walls hang a pair of prints — *L'Amour et Psyché* and *L'Amour désarmé*. Whatever may be the taste of the present owner, we may feel sure that in the days of her great-

grandmother there lay in the drawer of the chiffonier, by the side of the piece of tapestry work, a volume of Voltaire's tragedies, and that the good lady declaimed scenes from *Zaïre*, or hummed *La Belle Bourbonnaise*, as she prepared her pickles and preserved her jam.

Emerging into the business street of the town, the traveller passes into modern life, and, if it be market day, plunges into a scene of bustle and picturesque confusion. Carts and gigs, tilted against the edges of the cobbled roadway, crowd the thoroughfare. The pavement is thronged with market-gardeners, farmers, pig-jobbers, horse-dealers, fowl-merchants, people with thick voices, thick red necks and thick sticks, wearing new blouses and fur caps. Shrillest and shrewdest bargainer of all, and conspicuous among the men with her bulgy cotton umbrella, her short skirts, her strong boots, and her round black straw hat, is the *maîtresse femme*, who has been early left a widow. Stout, high-coloured, with sharp black eyes twinkling under thick eyebrows, and with something more than a suspicion of a moustache, she is given over, body and soul, to saving money. If she for a moment falls into a fit of abstraction—and you might almost as soon catch a weasel asleep—one hand unconsciously forms a cup, and above it mechanically rises the other, as though she were counting her *sous* by transferring the coins from the right hand to the left. Yet she has her virtues. Her bargain may be hard driven ;

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but, once struck, she will carry it out with strict honesty and scrupulous punctuality.

The crowd grows denser, the noise more continuous, as we approach the little *place*, which opens on the main street. Along its northern side runs the grey and buttressed wall of the Church of St. \*Austremoine, whose western front still remains, from base to summit, a floral burst and laughter of stone, though its sculptured niches were defaced by the Huguenots, and its cloister, half-destroyed at the Revolution, is now used as a granary, which bears upon its makeshift door the rudely daubed inscription "Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité." In its centre stands a fountain of the epoch and in the delicate style of the Renaissance, surrounded by avenues of limes, beneath which at intervals are placed benches of stone. On the side opposite to the church stretches the white front and green verandah of the *Café de la Paix*.

On ordinary days the *place*, except in the evening, is almost a deserted spot. A retired citizen occupies one of the seats, a grizzled *militaire* suns himself on another, warming himself into the fancy that he is once more in Algeria ; on a third sits the grocer's maid-of-all-work, her hands clasped under her white apron, dreaming of her native village, and paying little heed to the overdressed child which plays by her side in the dust. But to-day the *place* is bright with the red and blue umbrellas that shade the stalls, and noisy



with the clatter of the keenest chaffering. Yet, busy though the scene is, it is steeped in that indefinable atmosphere of gay leisure which is the heritage of a people who, in spite of their indefatigable industry, have yet succeeded in keeping on good terms with idleness. The itinerant tinman, the vendor of brown earthenware, and the dealer in damaged goods—a strangely miscellaneous assortment, which ranges from tattered books to rusty fire-irons—are the only representatives of the masculine gender among the stall-keepers. One or two men, with the abstracted air and shuffling gait which in France are peculiar to the unprotected male, are doing their marketing. But, for the rest, buyers and sellers alike are all women, and all appear to be middle-aged. Vain as a Papal bull against a comet is that Salic law passed by Frenchmen to exclude French women from ruling over them. The very existence of such a law is at once the admission of a danger and the acknowledgment of a defeat. Women, with their thumbs thrust through the handles of their doorkeys, and their knitting needles stuck into the bodies of their gowns, try, basket in hand, to cheapen their purchases. Beside the stalls of vegetables, eggs, poultry, and fruit, sit or stand rows of women, who to the eyes of the foreigner are all curiously alike. Dressed in plain cloth gowns, with blue aprons tied round their ample waists, their sleeves turned up to the elbows and showing their bare arms—browned and roughened

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by exposure—they one and all have apple cheeks, short square chins, and snub noses, set in the white framework of the caps from which their grizzled hair escapes in rebel locks. Bright-eyed, quick in movement, ready of tongue, lively in gesture, they seem by their vivacious vitality to give the lie to the premature wrinkles, which tell a tale, not so much of years, as of a hard, preoccupied, and anxious life.

The *Café*, like the *place*, is transformed by the bustle of the market. On ordinary days between the hours of ten and twelve, or from two to four, the whiskered waiter, in his black jacket and white apron, would be lounging at the door, smoking his cigarette in the verandah among the box-trees in green tubs, the wooden tables covered with brown oilcloth, and the footstools. Within, the fat landlord might be playing piquet with the auctioneer, the veterinary surgeon, or the retired *militaire*. But no stranger is present, unless it is a black-suited commercial traveller, who, in a quiet corner, contemplates with pride the elaborate flourish which concludes the report of his morning's work. Even the throne behind the bar, placed in a commanding situation to face the door, and flanked on either side by an edifice of punch-bowls crowned with a pyramid of billiard balls, would be unoccupied. But to-day all is different. Not, indeed, the external or internal decorations—they remain as they were. Outside, the rabbit still hangs suspended, by the side of

a painter's palette, from a festoon of pink ribbon which loosely binds together the three piled billiard cues. Inside, the panels, which alternate with looking-glasses in covering the walls, still represent groups of musketeers and amazons, who, with their every-day air of detached unconcern, drink champagne out of tall glasses in glades of hollyhocks. But the marble-topped tables within, and the wooden tables without, with fresh handfuls of sawdust thrown beneath them, are thronged with guests. Backwards and forwards hurries the waiter; the fat landlord bustles to and fro, ministering with his own hand to the wants of his more important guests; the stout, comely *dame de comptoir*, with a new riband in her dark hair, occupies her throne, and, with lynx-eyed quickness, anticipates the wishes of her visitors by the incessant ringing of her bell.

The *Café*, on such a day, or any evening, offers infinite scope for observation and reflection. In France, its life is led by all the world, from the highest to the lowest. A history of *cafés* would be the most important chapter in the history of modern French society; clean, bright, and gay, they are the *salons* of the democracy. We have, to our national loss, nothing like them. There is a babel of voices; but the chief stimulants are coffee or *sorbets*, and drunkenness is practically unknown within their doors. At nearly every table there is the keenest gambling; the faces of the players are ablaze with eagerness; the air

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resounds with "J'en donne" or "Je coupe et atout"; cards or dominoes are banged down with a triumphant emphasis which rings through the room. But two lumps of sugar are the stake, and give that zest to the game which the English clerk or shop-boy craves, and too often gratifies by a fraud upon his master. If there are soldiers quartered in the town, the room becomes a shifting scene of blended colour. Here the blouse, there the broadcloth; here the light blue and silver of a hussar, there the dark blue and green facings of the *chasseurs à pied*, or the red facings and red plumed shako of the *artillerie à pied*, or the red facings and red pompon of the *infanterie de la ligne*. Officers and men take their pleasures together under the same roof, but distinctions in rank are preserved by punctilious salutes. The groups of officers are worthy of a moment's study, because in the knots that gather at the various tables may be marked those common differences in origin which to us are so rare as to present insuperable difficulties. By the side of the grizzled veteran, who has won his epaulettes from the ranks, sits the smooth-faced lad who has jumped into the same grade through the *École*.

Wearied with the hubbub of the market, and dizzy with the babel of the *Café*, the traveller seeks to vary the scene. He has not far to go. He has but to cross the river and gain the summit of the hill above. On this side of the town the ground rises sharply towards a rocky crest, crowned

by the ruins of a feudal fortress—a dismantled castle, whose solid keep has alone defied the powder of Mazarin. A steep path, deeply worn in the rock, winds upwards. A wrinkled sibyl, distaff in hand, herds the solitary goat which browses on the scanty herbage of its banks; a bare-headed, bare-footed girl, knitting as she goes, marshals her flock of geese with a switch; a priest, with half-shut eyes and his thumb in his closed breviary, repeats his midday prayers, as he follows its windings, courting the line of diapered shadow which the plane trees cast upon the path. So far as human voices go, it is a silent spot, from which the traveller, seated among the ruined walls, looks down on the town nestling below the hill and encircled by the river. All around, the air is resonant with the chatter of jackdaws, the hum of insects, and the chirrup of grasshoppers. But these sounds, like that of the sheep cropping the short herbage, merely serve to intensify the stillness and the solitude. Only the ceaseless rataplan of the bats of the washerwomen, rising from below, remind him that he is near the haunts of men.

The castle and its owners have played a stirring part in French history. The path itself, worn by the traffic of centuries, is that by which the mail-clad men-at-arms hurried down to hold the ford, or drove their booty to their fastness. No wise man travels without a hobby. One is an architect, or a botanist, or a geologist, or a fisherman; another a student of manners and customs; another

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a conqueror of Alpine peaks. Nor is the Muse of history so cold a prude that she can never put off her dignity. When once her robe and buskin are laid aside, and she has escaped the glacial influence of the critic, she becomes the most genial, accommodating and resourceful of companions. Never in the way and never out of it, she requires no paraphernalia of fishing-rods, or hammers, or specimen-cases, or ice-axes. She neither dwells apart on inaccessible peaks of snow, nor hides in antediluvian formations; she is no shy nymph, only to be wooed and won in exceptional conditions of wind and sky and water. At home in all weathers and all places, she can, with a wave of her hand, people the grass-grown streets of dull villages and humdrum towns with all the picturesque and motley actors in a brilliant past, and carry her companions back to the fresh spring morning of the world, when poetry and romance sparkled like dew on forms of life which now are parched and dust-begrimed. Happy those with whom she travels, and nowhere happier than in provincial France.

So now, if that were the present object, we might close our eyes and hear again the clank of men-at-arms, or conjure up the gay *va-et-vient* of mediæval court and hunting-lodge. But France of to-day, not France of the past, is the theme. If the traveller, following the path which leads away from the town, reaches the nearest village, he will find it silent and deserted. The men are

in the fields : the women at market, the washing-place, or harvest. Sunning themselves before their doors, may sit a few white-capped old women, their trembling hands clasped over their sticks, their shoulders covered with gay-coloured handkerchiefs on which are printed battle scenes. The rhythmic tap of the cradle rockers within some cottage may tell its tale of infant life. A horse splashes through the half-dried pond ; the blue-green ducks quack, as they wallow in its slime. But other sounds there are none. The traveller retraces his steps and descends along the path, by which groups of market-women, chattering faster than their legs can carry them, are now returning to their homes among the villages on the plateau above. The river lies below him. If he be wise, he will seek its banks.

The river is a sluggish stream, maintaining between flat banks an undeviating course. Yet, if the fierce, turbulent Loire, with its sudden and disastrous floods, is truly the river of revolutionary France, a stream of this more common type more adequately represents the ordinary aspects of French provincial life and character. It has passed through no stage of enthusiasm or romance ; it was grown up when still a brook. It flows through centres of human life, caring for no other world than that of men. Easy of access, keenly alive to external impressions, suffering no passing object to escape the alertness of its notice, quick to reflect on its surface the most passing lights and ephemeral

shadows, it will never achieve a romantic end by precipitating itself from a precipice. So, too, the Frenchman—intensely and essentially objective, rarely pausing to analyse his own feelings or those of others, concentrated but not absorbed in the immediate object of his pursuit, projecting himself readily and rapidly into the feelings of those by whom he is for the moment surrounded—has overleaped the stage of imaginative romance which separates the child from the man.

The average Frenchman remains, throughout his life, in many respects a child, just as the average Englishman remains, if not a schoolboy, an undergraduate. The Frenchman *se range*, when his English contemporary is wandering in the Rocky Mountains of thought or of reality. Sometimes for better, sometimes for worse, many of the national characteristics are governed by the fact that the intermediate stage between the child and the man—that of boyhood—is a transition through which the one never passes, and from which the other never emerges. A Frenchman, for example, courts admiration with the simplicity of a child; he has a child's boastfulness, and a child's power of making believe. He calls the solitary box-tree in a painted barrel, by the side of which he drinks his coffee, a *bosquet de verdure*; he describes his square yard of garden, with its miniature bed of dahlias, as a *vaste jardin d'agrément*; with the eagerness of a six-year-old, he solicits your appreciation of their beauties. To him they are what



he says ; he prizes them not at their material, but at their relative value. He has fathomed the true secret of happiness, and is a wiser philosopher than the man who sneers. At least he is no hypocrite like the Englishman, who would rather bite his tongue off than express all the admiration that he feels for his own possessions ;—who affects to belittle them, describes his rural palace contemptuously as his “ little bachelor box in the country,” and would be seriously offended if his depreciation were accepted literally.

The Frenchman never feels the personal sense of the ludicrous ; he has no perception of incongruities ; he knows nothing of *mauvaise honte* ; he is a stranger to the self-consciousness of unrecognised dignity ; he cannot understand the meaning of the word “ prig,” because at no time, though often self-important, does he take the serious view of life, or of his part in it, the precocious conception of which distinguishes that variety of the human race. It is as a child that he can take delight in simple, almost infantine pleasures, that he enjoys himself freely and often selfishly, expresses his emotions openly, whether of joy, pleasure, affection, or rage, and walks in processions as if he were part of a pageant, not as if he were a shame-faced criminal. He cannot sympathise with the Englishman’s dread of attracting attention. He cannot comprehend why the only emotion which it is desirable to display in public is ill-temper, or why crayfish *à la Bordelaise* should

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be eaten with the same air of stoical indifference with which we sit down to a cold mutton chop. If he is immoral, he is so frankly and without disguise ; he bangs the front door noisily as he goes or returns, while the Englishman, shoes in hand, lets himself out and in with a latchkey, and probably officiates the next morning at family prayers. It is, again, because he is never a boy, that the Frenchman remains a child in the zest with which he pursues his immediate end, the naturalness of his enjoyment, the perpetual freshness of his interests. He never mortgages the present for the future. It is this concentration on the passing moment which gives to French life its *élan* and *abandon*, its directness and rapidity, its sparkle, allurements, and caprice.

But the river has other lessons to teach. By the side of the stream stand rows of poplars, and under the shade of every tree sit fishermen watching intently the motions of their floats. Every age and rank are represented. The provincial dignitary, laden with the affairs of state, sits between two ragged urchins, both more successful than himself. Their tackle is equally miscellaneous ; it ranges from the mast of "some great ammiral" and a line capable of holding Leviathan himself, to a mere twig, a coloured string, and a crooked pin. Their common prey is the gudgeon, and the sport is *par excellence* the national pastime of provincial France, the index and the school of national character. It is here that the good people of the

provinces acquire habits of frugality and patience, and are trained to be content with little and to make the most of everything. It is here that the rural shopkeeper was taught the motto, *au-gagne-petit*, which is the canon of his trade. He appor-tions his family to his income: his quiver is never so full that he is forced into fraud. His pleasures are domestic; his dissipation is the café, where his sugar gives him a keener interest in his game than the bet which the British shop-boy robs the till to pay. It is here that the peasant has learnt to cultivate every barleycorn of soil, to utilise every possible coign of vantage, to collect the droppings of his cattle as carefully as the gold-seeker sifts sand for ore, and, prodigal of nothing but himself, sparing of everything except his labour, to toil the livelong day for infinitesimal rewards. Nature is bountiful to him, but he does not squander her largess. He himself, his wife, his cow, his dog, are beasts of draught and of burden; his baby, as soon as it can toddle, is a herder of flocks; the puff-ball puppy is trained to guard its master's property; even the animals eat within their tether. As gudgeon-fishers the industrial classes have learned to live on food which the British pauper throws to the dogs. If wealth be attained, they neither slacken their exertions nor increase their expenditure. They still don the blouse, whose purple patches are as honourable to them as the gaudy quarterings with which heralds adorn the coats of our successful tradesmen. The

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women wear their simple caps rather than affect those Parisian novelties which on the heads of some of our fellow-countrywomen are as grotesque as the kiss bestowed by Titania on the cheek of Bottom.

Small and unworthy of notice though the single gudgeon may be, the *friture* is incomparable. The lesson has been learned in many ways, and the influence of the national pastime is not only culinary but literary, social, and moral. From it the man of letters has learnt the art of raising a dainty palace out of airy nothings and of building on slender facts his unrivalled generalisations. In society it has taught the Frenchman the value of small talk, and the unwisdom of only opening his mouth when he thinks that he has hooked a salmon. Morally it has revealed to him the secret that happiness consists, not in an isolated day of expensive enjoyment purchased by a vast outlay of time and trouble, but in the succession of small pleasures which lie at his feet—that it is, in fact, rather a mosaic of an infinite number of tiny gems than the single jewel of great cost, which philosophers seek and seldom find. The jostling of young and old in pursuit of the same sport keeps the *grandpère* in touch with the *bébé*. The juxtaposition of rags and respectability on the banks of the same stream carries on the work of the *Café*, and promotes the kindly feeling of rural classes. It also fosters that contempt for appearances which enables the country gentleman to tether his cows

under his dining-room windows, to dispense with liveries for his servants, and to drive in his antiquated shay a horse not unacquainted with the plough. Gudgeon-fishers can have no false shame.

Finally, the absurd disparity between the means and the end in gudgeon-fishing—a disparity which runs through other forms of French sport—accounts for the absence of any sense of incongruity which in France meets and amuses us on every side. When, with imperturbable gravity, the cat's-meat man proclaims his wares with a fanfaronade of trumpets which might herald the approach of a conqueror of kingdoms, we feel that he must occupy his spare time in fishing for gudgeon with a barber's pole and a hawser. The same reflection may explain, in French literature, the frequent contrast between the grandiloquence of the exordium and the insignificance of the conclusion ; it may also help us to comprehend the process of thought by which a would-be landscape gardener, with a taste for topiary work, can cheaply satisfy his passion by clipping the back of his poodle into rosettes and pompons, or to understand the habit of mind of the carter who gravely harnesses with bits of string an ass no bigger than a dog as the leader to the magnificent *Percheron* who stands eighteen hands high in the shafts.

In England natural gudgeon-fishers are unfortunately rare. But they may be trained ; and never had any nation a greater need of reviving a lost art or practising a forgotten craft. Much

## 22 A DAY IN PROVINCIAL FRANCE

is talked about "salmonising" the Thames. It would be more useful to stock it with gudgeon. If we could only establish an inspector of gudgeon fisheries in the place of the guardians of our salmon, the country would be happier. But writer and reader alike are weary of moralising. It is growing late in the evening of an early autumn day. Summer is dying; a shiver passes over the plain, and faint white mists begin to float in undulating wisps across the flat meadows. It is time to make for the bridge and the town.

On the bridge is gathered a motley crowd. Sleek citizens have closed their doors, and sallied forth, with their wives and sons and daughters and servants, to take the air; peasants bid adieu till the next market day to the dancing lights of the local metropolis, and, laden with baskets and bundles, tramp sturdily homewards; artisans lean over the bridge to catch the freshness of the river breeze; on the parapet sit men and women, boys and girls, chattering and twittering like swallows on a church tower. Here the *bûcherons*, bent double beneath their loads, rest their burdens against the sides of the bridge to interchange a pinch of snuff. There washerwomen poise their *hottes* upon the wall and free their arms for a gossip. Beneath, great timber-laden barges shoot silently from under the arches, and lose themselves in the dark shadow of the poplars beyond. Above, soldiers swarm like bees, gather into knots, disperse, and collect again. *Réservistes* of all shapes

and sizes, uniform only in the inevitable red trousers and long blue coat, stand awkwardly at attention to salute a group of officers who pass clanking down the pavement. Now and then a tramp slouches by, begging his way, not like the mediæval palmer, to the Holy Land, but to Paris.

Two priests, enjoying a hard-earned holiday, pause by the parapet ; the one short, round, and rubicund ; the other tall, spare, severe. It is ever thus ; the *jour gras* always hunts in couple with the *jour maigre*. The one leans his paunch against the bridge, doffs his *tricorné*, mops his face, and looks down upon the lights dancing on the stream below ; the other stands erect, gazing across the mirror which the river holds out to life, into the depths of the distant shadows. Sportsmen, faultless in all the details of their appointment, followed wearily by their liver-and-white pointers, tramp over the bridge into the town. A grey-bearded goat jumps upon the parapet, looks inquisitively at the water below, shakes his head, leaps down, and scampers off, as the wild reedy note of the herdsman's pipe blends with the blare of the cowhorn with which a personage in a general's uniform hawks copies of *Le Petit Journal* at a halfpenny apiece. Down the centre of the bridge pours an incessant stream of vehicles. Over the paved causeway clatters a "dogue cart," with jangling bells, and César or Minos yelping in advance. The great grey horses

strain against their lyre-shaped painted collars, and strike sparks from the stones as they answer to the whips and shouts of the drivers in the effort to drag the high-wheeled timber-laden waggons up the steep pitch of the crown of the bridge. Creaking and groaning over the pavement lumbers 'a bullock cart, as rude in construction as the state coach of King Dagobert. Antediluvian hooded gigs pass by at a steady pace, filled with peasants, the women holding lanterns on their ample knees, the horses going at a dogged, patient trot, as though they knew that they must travel far on into the night before the home is reached in one of the little clearings of the forest of the Laigue. From the town beyond comes the lively rattle of the drums, as with quick step the patrol beats the rataplan through the streets, and all is over for the day.



## FRENCH FARMING

ENGLAND draws her supplies from the civilised world, while France is self-sufficing, and might be self-supporting. England concentrates her agriculture on bread, milk, and meat; the produce which is raised in France is as varied as it is abundant. No comparison between the two countries in respect of fertility is fair if it is based solely on products of which our farmers have made a speciality. While variety is the essence of French husbandry, quantity and quality within a limited range are the characteristic of English farming.

Within her own borders France produces not only the necessities but the luxuries of existence, all that is required to enjoy as well as to support life. England can breed no finer horses for their respective purposes than the Anglo-Norman carriage-horse, the sturdy Percheron, the heavy animal of the Boulonnais, or the mettled *race bigourdane* of the plain of Tarbes. Of her native cattle France is justly proud. The white Charollais-Nivernais cattle are unrivalled for their precocity and their power of work. The golden-hued cattle of the Parthenais, with their delicate heads, large

soft eyes, and black points, fill the markets of Cholet, or are bought up by Norman graziers for the rich pastures of the Vallée d'Auge ; like the Limousin cattle, they are excellent in the plough, but are slow in arriving at maturity. No finer beef is sent to market than that of the Mancelle breed crossed with the Durham, which the Comte de Falloux has brought to perfection ; and England cannot dream of competing with the veal of Champagne. The cows of the Cotentin have no superiors as milkers. The bright-coloured red Salers or Auvergne cattle, with wide-open, backward-sloping, tapering horns, or their rivals of the d'Aubrac breed, with their white muzzles and badger-coloured hides, or the *race femeline* of Franche-Comté, are praised for their excellence in meat, milk, and work. Agriculturists in the south again have their special breeds, such as the *race gasconne* or the *race ariégeoise*—the strongest workers of districts south of the Garonne—the *races bazadaise, garonnaise, landaise, and basquaise*.

The department of the Aisne, and especially the neighbourhood of Soissons, holds its own with its merinos and métis-merinos against the English Leicesters, while the mutton of the Berrichon or the Solognot is as famed for its delicacy as that of Clun Forest or Wales, and the ewes of the Larzac breed, on the pebbly *causses* of Aveyron, produce the celebrated Roquefort cheese. The mules of Poitou, of Barcelonnette (Basses-Alpes), and of Hautes-Pyrénées are famous for their size

and strength. The long-necked, wall-sided, round-backed, long-legged white pig, once so familiar in rural districts, is improved by judicious crossing; and the pure races *Craonnaise*, *Normande*, *Limousine* and *Périgourdine* are not to be despised. In the production of milk, butter, and cheese the Vallée d'Auge, the *terre classique de l'herbe* where grass is literally the *bras d'or*, and the districts of Isigny and Gournay are unrivalled by the richest pastures of which this country can boast. The eggs and poultry of the fowl-yards of Western Normandy supply food both to France and England.

The northern departments not only feed thousands of cattle on the pulp of the beetroot, but manufacture enough sugar for home consumption and foreign exportation. The mulberry plantations of Gard or Hérault, the wool of the Aisne, and the flax of the Pas de Calais supply the raw material of the textile fabrics of France. "Les arbres de Normandie," as Bernardin de St. Pierre called the apple trees, produce cider in abundance; wines and spirits of all kinds and qualities are manufactured from vines, beetroot, or potatoes; hops supply the wants of her people, though the loss of the Alsatian provinces has reduced the growth; olive-yards and walnuts produce oil for domestic use. France supplies the English markets with her early vegetables, the asparagus of Argenteuil, the artichokes and broccoli of Roscoff, and the kitchen-garden produce of the environs of Paris or the *hortillons* of Amiens. Every grocer's shop in Europe con-

tains her almonds, her preserved fruits, her dried apples, or her tinned vegetables. According to the season she floods Covent Garden with her strawberries, cherries, pears, apricots, and plums ; her *chasselas* grapes from Thomery, her peaches from Montreuil, or her melons from Vaucluse. Angers sends her flowers, famous since the days of King René, and Grasse her perfumes to every part of the country. Nor is France deficient in the more solid sources of national wealth. She has coal, iron, lead, stone, timber, slate, and clay for earthenware in rich abundance. La Belle France fairly earns the enthusiasm of her patriotic inhabitants by her natural fertility.

France is, in fact, a country of varieties and of differences ; her climate, her soil, her scenery, her agricultural practices, her land tenures are no less diversified than her crops. Every climate, except that of the tropics, is represented in the country. Her soil is, on the whole, superior to that of England, and in one respect she has a marked advantage. Berri has its *brandes*, Gascony its *landes*, Champagne its bald, dusty chalk hills ; but throughout the length and breadth of the country there are none of those stubborn clays which break the heart of the English farmer. Her scenery is said to be monotonous ; yet every district, even among those which bear no marked features, differs from its neighbour. The rolling, treeless, unenclosed plains of Picardy are totally unlike the small, well-wooded, double-hedged fields

of Normandy, or the *closertes* of Anjou, or the copse-clad labyrinth of short, choppy hills and valleys of the Vendean *bocage*, where the peasantry could literally fulfil the command *s'égailler*, and disperse themselves like dew. The uniformity of English agriculture, land tenures, and civilisation imprint monotony on much of her rural economy. But throughout France diversities of climate, land-ownership, and land tenure have left their mark. Here farm labourers are hired by the year, and are lodged and fed in the farmhouse; here they have their separate homes—houses which they have purchased with their savings—and small properties that supplement their weekly wages. Each flock of sheep is here the property of a single owner, here of many Provençal sheepmasters; here, as in Champagne, the common herdsman leads the flocks of the villagers to the pastures. Here is a *métayer* or a *maître valet*; here a peasant proprietor, or a Picard holding under the *droit de marché*; here a rack-rented tenant-farmer, or a Breton *domanier à congément*. Each different system of land tenure affects the grouping of the rural population. In Seine-et-Marne or Somme, large farms and farmsteads, isolated from one another, are the rule, as on a smaller scale they are in Brittany. In Champagne, Picardy, or La Brenne the cultivators of the soil are grouped together in villages; a palisade of hedge and trees marks the clusters in which, on the high table-land of the Pays de Caux, the Cauchois congregate; in Marche

the farmers are clustered together in village communities of peasant owners, each village group consisting of members of the same family. Architectural peculiarities mark the differences of climate or of soil ; the white, flat-roofed, red-tiled houses of the south, the Norman farmsteads standing in the midst of pastures and orchards, the Pyrenean dwellings built of flints interspersed with courses of brick, the whitewashed buildings of Saintonge, the brick walls and slated roofs of the Ardennes, the black, lava-built dens of the Auvergnat, the sombre granite houses of the Breton, the thatched cottages of the Marche, the cave dwellings burrowed into the chalk cliffs of the Loire, each tell their own, and each a different, story.

Variety is at once the charm and the solid advantage of France. It is by her diversities of soil and climate that her peasant proprietary thrives. By the same diversity she is protected against foreign competition or adverse seasons. As in England the relations of landlord and tenant-farmer constitute practically the only system of land tenure, and corn-growing and cattle-feeding her only agricultural industry, so her districts are purely agricultural or purely manufacturing. It is not so in France, and too much stress can hardly be laid on the contrast. On the one hand, her land tenures are more flexible and more elastic, and her modes of cultivation more diversified, so that all her eggs are not stored in a single basket ; on the other hand, agriculture and manufacture are

not separated into distinct districts. The squalid haunts of English trade are surrounded at the best by blackened wastes ; in French Flanders dense population and high farming advance hand in hand. At the doors of factories, at the brink of coal-pits, is some of the best cultivated land in the world, land which affords recreation and profit to thousands of artisans. The importance of this feature in its bearing on the happiness of the industrial population and on the alleged pulverisation of the ownership of French soil can hardly be exaggerated.

To attempt within the limits of a single essay a detailed picture of the varied rural economy of France would be an impossible task. I propose first to sketch the history of her agricultural progress ; and, secondly, to glance at the existing condition of the cultivators of the soil, in order to see whether the varied relations of labour with land which prevail in France have stood the strain of agricultural depression better than the uniform system of landlords and tenant-farmers with which we are familiar in England.

Traces still linger of the primitive method of common field husbandry upon which, in France as well as in England, was superimposed the feudal system. In Marche, for instance, the border country of "no man's land" which separated the *roitelet* of Bourges from his English rival in Aquitaine, are to be found family communities grouped in villages consisting of from ten to

twenty houses, inhabited by men of the same name who farm their private properties and enjoy the use of common lands. The Department of the Creuse, which represents part of this district, contains about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  million acres. Of this, 1,900,000 acres are owned by peasant proprietors, and 650,000 acres are held in common. Interesting as it would be to trace the growth of this system out of the primitive village community, and to follow the steps by which it was almost universally exchanged for some form of feudal tenure, my present object is rather to sketch the growth in importance and efficacy of the despised practice of agriculture.

At first in France, as well as in England, the monks were the only pioneers of good farming. The North of France owes some of its agricultural pre-eminence to the start which it obtained through the great monastic establishments with which it was studded. Already in the eleventh and twelfth centuries the monasteries had begun to reclaim the vast forest of the Ardennes which stretched from the east to the sea coast. In other districts their influence proved less advantageous. La Brenne in Berri, like the Vale of Evesham, was sacrificed to their desire for grain crops, when pasture was the natural source of wealth. Yet even here it has been to the monks of St. Cyran and Méobecq that the Brennois owes the pisciculture of the district, with its three well-arranged ponds *à menu*, *à norrain*, and *à gros poisson*.

With the fourteenth century begins the literature



of French farming. And here, on the threshold of the history, appears a distinctive difference in point of development between French and English agriculture. Charles V caused the treatise of Crescentius of Bologna to be translated into French, and paid 1,000 livres to "le rustique Jean de la Brie, dit le Bon Berger," for his "Livre de Berger." Thus, while in England the gentry succeeded the monks as pioneers of agriculture, in France it is the State, whether represented by the monarchy, the empire, or the republic, which followed the Church in promoting the progress of good farming. The sixteenth century witnessed a general impulse to the study of agriculture. It was now that Herrera in Spain, Tarello in Italy, Heresbach in Germany, Fitzherbert and Tusser in England wrote upon the subject. In 1554 Charles Estienne, a member of the illustrious family of printers, published his "*Prædium Rusticum*," which was the first methodical work on French agriculture. It contains disquisitions on everything necessary for country life, descends into such details as the management of bees, and concludes with a curious chapter on sport and on birds and beasts of chase. As Googe translated Heresbach, so Gervase Markham made an English version of the "*Prædium Rusticum*." The gentry began to pay attention to the cultivation of the soil. Michel de l'Hôpital solaced his exile from court with his farm at Étampes. One other book of importance belongs to this period. In 1563 Bernard Palissy.

the Huguenot potter, wrote his "Recepte véritable par laquelle tous les hommes de la France pourront apprendre à multiplier et augmenter leur trésors." It may be compared with Fitzherbert's treatise on surveying, and Markham's "Improvement of the Weald of Kent."

Religious wars checked further progress. When peace was restored, Henry IV and Sully laboured to promote a better state of things. Strong in the faith that arable and pasture farming is the nursing-mother of a State and the true gold mine of Peru, they protected agricultural implements from seizure for debt, offered rewards for the reclamation of wastes, opened out new roads, and urged the adoption of new crops and improved practices. Nicot had already introduced the tobacco plant; the potato was known as food for cattle; beetroot, hops, and forage crops were ready for use, but their value was little understood. To destroy the wolves which devoured sheep by thousands, Henry revived the *louveteurs* whom Francis I had instituted; to improve the French horses he organised the State-breeding establishments. In Olivier de Serres, Seigneur du Pradel, the father of French agriculture, the king and his adviser found an able coadjutor. At Henry's request, de Serres wrote a treatise on the silkworm. But his great work is his "Théâtre d'Agriculture," published in 1600. He wrote of the beetroot: "Le jus qu'elle rend en coulant est semblable au sirop à sucre." It was two centuries before his

hint was taken, when France was thrown back by the loss of her colonial sugar supplies upon her native resources. He also insisted on the value of sainfoin, and introduced it into the Vivarais. Arthur Young was an enthusiastic admirer of the great French agriculturist, made a pilgrimage to his birthplace, Villeneuve de Berg (Ardèche), and subscribed to the statue then being erected to his honour.

Once more a dreary interval elapsed during which agriculture remained stationary. Colonial and commercial enterprise, or foreign aggrandisement, absorbed the energies of the Ministers of Louis XIII and Louis XIV. As in England so in France, little use was made of the new crops which subsequently enriched the country. No care was bestowed on the improvement of live stock; horses alone received attention; the Government *haras* date from the seventeenth century, and the only important work published in the period is the "Parfait Maréchal" of Jacques de Soleyssel. Yet the name of Dom Pierre Pérignon of the Abbey of Hautvilliers, near Epernay, who died in 1715, deserves to be venerated as the inventor of champagne. The tide of fashion set in the direction of Le Nôtre's improvements, who laboured to show how

L'Art peut subjuguier la Nature rebelle.

The patronage of Louis XIV was reserved for this "Capability" Brown of the seventeenth cen-

tury, and for Jean de la Quintinie, the first kitchen gardener of the day.

On the peasantry the reign of the "Grand Monarque" inflicted cruel hardships. The frequent risings of the Jacquerie in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries proved that even the proverbial patience of a rural population was limited. Throughout the sixteenth century rebellions had been frequent; Guienne had had its Piteaux in 1541, and Auvergne its Gauthiers in 1562; in 1594 Périgord was harried by the Croquants, whose name passed into a common expression for a "poor wretch":

*Passe un certain croquant qui marchait les pieds nus.*

But the peasants had never before known such misery as between 1680 and 1750. In 1697 they were obliged, as Boisguilbert states in his "Détail," to sell the land which they had painfully acquired in the two preceding centuries. Famine was chronic in rural districts; bread made of fern-leaves was the diet of the peasantry, and they died like flies. The winters of 1709 and 1740 were two of the severest ever known; the cattle plague which visited the country in 1747 carried off its victims by the thousand; taxes grew heavier every day, and their incidence fell exclusively on the industrial classes. The nobility flocked to Paris, became absentees, and vied with one another in lavish display, for which the peasant paid. Campaigns abroad denuded the country of its

strength ; at home the wars of religion or of the Fronde had turned districts, like Berri and Sologne, into deserts ; the peasantry wandered over the country, listless, livid spectres, neglecting their land because they had no certainty of reaping its fruits, living on roots and herbs. Vauban, in his "Dîme Royale," states that one-tenth of the people were beggars, and that five-tenths of the remainder could give no alms because they were starving. The revocation of the edict of Nantes destroyed hundreds of local industries which had eked out the earnings of the peasantry. Thus, to take a single district in the North of France, the hat factory of Neufchâtel near Caudebec, the paper-mills of Vire, the cloth works of Coutances, the pin factories of Conches and Laigle, were either wholly or partially closed. The old Burgundian saying applied in the seventeenth century to many parts of Central France :

En mil trois cent quarante et huit  
A Nuits de cent restèrent huit.

Even the measures taken by the Government to prevent the recurrence of famine aggravated the evil. Everything was sacrificed to corn ; the time for sowing was fixed by law ; vineyards were ploughed up ; no new crops could be introduced ; the impoverished soil became more and more exhausted.

The second half of the eighteenth century witnessed a complete change. We turn, as it were,

from the sombre etchings of La Bruyère to the smiling pictures of Watteau. The best side of the reign of Louis XV and of the ascendancy of Madame de Pompadour is the encouragement offered to agriculture. The period from 1750 to 1789, in spite of many dark features, is the brightest we have yet reached in the history of French husbandry. Farmers felt the spur of commercial progress. Political science and philosophy combined to encourage agriculture. Law's disastrous enterprises had so shaken the old commercial system, that France welcomed with delight the theory that Quesnay and the physiocrats pushed to extravagant lengths, and believed land to be the only source of wealth, and tillers of the soil the only productive labourers. The Encyclopædists and Rousseau stimulated the love of rural life by their doctrine of a return to nature. Country pursuits became a passion :

Choiseul est agricole et Voltaire est fermier.

Agriculture was officially recognised as a department of the administration in 1759. The *agromanie* was encouraged not only by Louis XV, his mistresses, and his Ministers, but by men of science like Buffon. Sèvres china presented its idyllic pictures of Arcadian felicity ; and Voltaire, the darling of the hour, wrote :

Et l'on ne doit pas moins pour le soutien du trône  
A la faux de Cérès qu'au sabre de Bellone.

Enlightened prelates, like the Archbishop of Bor-

deaux or the Bishop of Agde, who introduced into Lower Languedoc the African sheep of the *race barbarine*, vied with the lay peers in agricultural zeal. The Marquis de Turbilly was the Townshend of the new movement, and offered the best example of a reforming landlord. He improved his estates near La Flèche, reclaimed wastes, and incited his tenantry to healthy rivalry. He was the adviser of Louis XV, and of Bertin, the first Minister of Agriculture, and his "Mémoire sur les défrichements" (1760) was studied by Arthur Young. A host of agricultural writers sprang up, among whom may be mentioned Duhamel de Monceau and Mirabeau, the father of a more celebrated son, whose "Ami des Hommes" was published in 1755. In 1751 the first agricultural newspaper, the "Journal Économique," was set on foot by Guettard and Boudet. An agricultural society was established at Rennes in 1757, and this example was followed in every part of the country. In 1761 a central society was formed at Paris, to correspond with the various local societies. A veterinary school was created at Lyons in 1762, chiefly through the instrumentality of Charles Bourgelat; and four years later a second was founded at Alfort. Prizes were offered at provincial academies on agricultural topics; courses of lectures were given on botany; steps were taken to establish itinerant inspectors and professors; finally, Bertin himself opened the model-farm school at Annel-lès-Bertinval near Compiègne.

The movement culminated in the reign of Louis XVI, who placed himself at its head. Marie-Antoinette had her dairy at the Trianon, and Louis, by the aid of Daubenton, formed his flock of merinos at Rambouillet with the Abbé Tessier for its head shepherd. Great landlords followed the royal example, like the Duc de Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, the patron of Arthur Young, who established his model farm at Liancourt, or the Duc de Béthune-Charost, of whom Louis XV said, "il n'a pas beaucoup d'apparence, mais il vivifie trois de mes provinces." It was now that Parmentier introduced the potato into cultivation as an article of human food, and his name is commemorated in a soup; turnips were imported from England into the North of France, and the Government spent a considerable sum on the purchase of seed from English farmers; mangelwurzel were brought from Germany; the use of sainfoin and colza spread in the northern districts. Now also Althen, whose romantic life was chiefly passed in slavery in the East, introduced madder into the district of Vaucluse, made the fortune of the province, and died in miserable poverty. Gilbert, who might almost be called the Arthur Young of France, was the apostle of judicious rotations, and sought to improve the old three-course system, with its wasteful fallows, by using such crops as lucerne, clover, vetches, and sainfoin.

The Government redoubled its efforts to promote the growth of farming. It recognised the value



of statistical information, and charged intendants with the duty of procuring from every parish returns, many of which are still extant, of the prospects and results of the harvests. It distributed tracts and treatises, encouraged men of science to investigate the principles of farming, fostered stock breeding. New systems, crops, and implements were introduced; new blood was imported from Denmark to improve the Breton horses; the Dishley sheep were smuggled into the North of France to cross with the merinos. Forest laws were better administered; rivers and watercourses were cleaned, straightened, and embanked. Fiscal imposts were lightened; exemptions from taxation conferred on the best farmers; military duties modified in the interests of the tillers of the soil; aid was distributed to those who had suffered from floods, storms, bad harvests, or the cattle plague. It is curious to notice the demand for free trade. Wages, it was said, could not rise unless corn was rendered dearer by permission to export. France at the end of the eighteenth century was a free trader for the same reason which now in the twentieth century makes the nation protectionist. Other economists were more visionary or more enlightened. Turgot and Mirabeau dreamed of free trade in corn in peace and war, with friends and enemies. One of Turgot's first measures as a Minister was to authorise the free circulation of corn within the limits of the kingdom, a measure which he had advocated in his famous letters written as intendant

of the Limousin. In 1787 freedom to export corn out of the country was granted. A committee of agricultural inquiry was appointed, on which sat such men as Lavoisier, Dupont de Nemours, Tillet, and the Abbé Lefèvre. Its recommendations throw considerable light on the existing state of agriculture. The committee complains of the inability of corporate bodies to grant leases, the incidence of tithes, the vexatious rights of common pasture. It deplores the small quantity of live stock, and points out the means of carrying a larger head afforded by roots and artificial grasses. It proposes to encourage domestic industries by the cultivation of flax and hemp and the establishment of spinning schools. It advocates, as the Abbé Rozier had already done, the creation of experimental farms. It urges the reclamation of sandy wastes by the growth of pines. The credit of this last recommendation was due to Brémontier, who was permitted to carry out his plan on the sterile districts between the Gironde and the Adour. In the reign of Louis XVIII a statue was erected on the dunes, which he had fertilised, to the memory of the man who conquered for his country upwards of 370,000 acres.

For the most part the Government proved powerless to carry out its projected reforms; an empty treasury, an exhausted credit, a corrupt currency, presented insurmountable obstacles. As though in mockery of deferred repentance, these tardy efforts only served to accelerate the Revolu-

tion. The peasantry were still exposed to cruel injustice. Inequalities of taxation, local and personal, urban and rural, exemptions bestowed upon the rich, different laws, customs and usages created a chaos of inextricable confusion which readily lent itself to endless waste, corruption and wrong. Turgot and Necker failed to break up the corn rings; societies of jobbers still raised and lowered prices; and it was the royal speculations in these operations which gave rise to the legend of the "Pacte de Famine," and sent the Paris mob to seek the *boulangier* at Versailles. Like all these tardy efforts at reform, the fashionable pursuit of agriculture and the sympathy of philosophers only rendered revolution more imminent. Formerly the peasant was sunk in torpid acquiescence; he accepted his condition as inevitable; his mind was concentrated on the accumulation of sou after sou to gratify his *soif du sillon*. Now he awoke to find that he was the only productive labourer, the sole representative of the virtues of primitive society; landlords apologised for the feudal dues which they exacted; State tax-gatherers admitted the fiscal system to be intolerable. As the peasant paid his dues at the mill, the bakehouse, the winepress, the bridge, the market; as he was dragged from his plough to labour for others, while his own land lay untilled—his smouldering discontent was fanned into a flame. No longer torpid and apathetic, he was alert, open-eyed, straining his ears to catch the faintest whisper of coming

change. At last two passionate desires banished every other feeling from his mind—the fierce wish to sweep away those royal, ecclesiastical, and feudal dues which he was told were as unjust as he knew them to be oppressive, and the intense longing to possess the land which he was assured was his by natural right.

When the storm burst, the condition of the peasant was indisputably improved. Territorial privileges were abolished, feudal incidents disappeared; the peasant proprietor was freed from his fetters. Though the Revolution did not create, it greatly enlarged his class. In the fourteenth century peasant proprietors were numerous in France, and, on the whole, they increased continuously. In 1697 they were forced, as we have seen, to sell their estates. But this check was only temporary. Forbonnais points out that in 1750 impoverished landlords sold their lands to their tenants. Necker states that there was in his time *une immensité* of peasant proprietors. Doniol (“Hist. des Classes Rurales”) says that before the Revolution a quarter of the soil had passed into their hands. Arthur Young goes further when he declares that in 1787 a third of the land was tilled by peasant owners. The returns on which the land tax was based in 1790 show that, in many districts, the number of proprietors then amounted to two-thirds of those among whom the land is now divided. It is probable that before the Revolution there were four millions of peasants who

farmed their own land. The sale of the lands of the Church, the nobles, and the communes increased their number by nearly a half. It would have added many more, but that the sale of the common lands was suspended because it deprived commoners of their rights. The early extinction of commons in the north is one of the most important causes of its agricultural supremacy.

The National Assembly, the Convention, and Napoleon interested themselves in the promotion of the science of farming. Experimental farms were established at Sceaux and Versailles; Gilbert was employed to import merinos from Spain; a national sheepfold was established at Arles; Napoleon ordered an accurate agricultural survey of the country. But the real energies of the country were absorbed elsewhere, and progress was suspended. Thouin, François de Neufchâteau, the Comte de Chanteloup, François Yvart, and many others vainly strove to inculcate the union of science with practice. Their words fell unheeded on the ears of a nation absorbed in the conquest of the world or a death-grapple for existence. Another cause which impeded the growth of scientific agriculture was the ill-success of theorists. As Gabriel Plattes, Jethro Tull, and Arthur Young failed in land management, so the Marquis de Turbilly, the Comte de Chanteloup, and Althen lost fortunes by their experiments. In more peaceful times France has advanced with great rapidity. Among the crowd of names

associated with recent progress we shall mention only three—names hardly less familiar in England than in France—those of Mathieu Dombasle, de Gasparin, and Léonce de Lavergne. The first-named conferred inestimable benefits on the country by the improvements which he effected in agricultural implements. His statue at Nancy represents him in his simple farming dress, holding in his hand the “*Annales de Roville*”; at his feet is the plough, which symbolises his extraordinary influence on the cultivation of the soil.

Since 1840 thousands of acres have been added to the profitable occupation of the country. Waste lands have been broken up, marshes drained, sands planted, foreshores enclosed; in Brittany alone 750,000 acres have thus been brought into cultivation. New roads have been opened up, new facilities of transport provided, new markets brought to the door of the farmer. Agricultural education, adapted to the scientific and the ignorant, has been organised by the State in a manner which cannot fail to produce important results. In the best cultivated districts of France the soil is well tilled, and the crops are well adapted to the requirements of the locality; the best implements are employed; marl, lime, and manures are freely used; the wasteful system of fallow is abandoned. Farm buildings have improved, and, if France uses less machinery in the cultivation of the soil, it is because less is required. But, true to her character for variety, the difference between

the best and the worst cultivated districts is startling. The cereal produce of the country has more than doubled since 1815; the area of wheat cultivation has extended, to the restriction of rye and maslin; and, though the average yield of wheat per acre scarcely exceeds half that of England, that of oats has nearly doubled, and the French farmer competes successfully with his English rival both in the quantity and in the quality of his barley. In industrial crops the most noticeable feature is the extended cultivation of sugar beetroot, the lever of northern farmers, which has increased fivefold in the past forty years. In meadow management and in dairy farming the French are admittedly our rivals; they are our superiors in the produce of their poultry-yards. In horses, cattle, sheep, and pigs a marked improvement is manifest both in quantity and in quality.

Yet the great deficiency in the rural economy of France still continues to be the comparatively small quantity of its live stock. For this there are several reasons. The peasant proprietor values his cattle for their work, as well as for their milk, meat, and manure. He cannot afford to keep two sets of animals, horses for the plough and cattle for the butcher. But this question of employing cattle in agricultural operations has recently assumed a new aspect. Formerly the peasant killed his cattle either too soon or too late—as young calves, or as worn-out animals from the

plough. He still rears calves for the butcher, an operation which we in England regard as wasteful, but which is profitable for small landowners. He still sends his cattle to the market after they have served their time at the plough. But he no longer sends them when they are aged and worked to skin and bone. He uses them carefully for five or six years, and then sells them to the grazier before they are too exhausted to be fattened. Frenchmen urge that the beef of healthy animals is far better than that of the unnaturally precocious beasts which our farmers send to market at two years old. Again, sheep have declined in numbers, and it is obvious that this diminution is the inevitable result of the extension of a peasant proprietary. There is no room for a flock upon his small holding. The extinction of *vaine pâture*, and *parcours*, and common rights has destroyed the only means which the peasant possessed of keeping sheep. Other causes combine to produce the same result. Wool no longer fetches its price, and the peasant will not eat mutton. Since the days of Bakewell English sheep have been bred for meat; French sheep from the time of Louis XVI have been valued for their wool. If it is said, Why not breed sheep exclusively for meat? the answer would be, Who is to eat it? Parts of Bas-Languedoc, and especially the department of the Aude, are the only districts with which I am acquainted in which the beef of the *pot-au-feu* is replaced by mutton. The



labourer fed on the farm in Touraine or Anjou expects beef, and turns up his nose at mutton; domestic servants will rarely touch it. Except in the towns it is hardly eaten.

But if we trace to this deficiency of live stock the defects of French farming, the ultimate cause of both defects and deficiencies is the slow growth of the population. All the improvements to which we have alluded have been effected without the stimulus of rapidly increasing numbers. In the seventeenth century the population of France was about twenty millions. In 1881 it was 37,672,000. The "Journal of the Statistical Society" for January 1881 states that while the birth-rate exceeds the death-rate in Sweden by 11·5 per thousand, in Denmark by 11·1, in the United Kingdom by 9·2, in France the annual excess is only 2·3. In some districts the population is actually declining. This remarkable contrast between England and France explains the divergence in the agricultural history of the two countries.

In many points French agriculture has followed the same lines of development as English farming. Both countries felt the impulse given to agriculture in the sixteenth century, which in both countries gave birth to a great agricultural literature. The misery of rural France in the central portion of the period is paralleled by the condition of the rural population under the Tudors, though the causes were in the one case civil war, in the other industrial revolution. Towards the close of the

sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, agriculture revived in both countries, only to be in both countries checked as the period advances. From 1740 onwards the progress of both countries was rapid. Farmer George, like Louis XVI, headed the movement; great landlords followed the royal lead; Lord Townshend, Bishop Watson, Arthur Young, Sir John Sinclair, Mr. Coke of Holkham, each had his French rival. In both countries the taste was accompanied by a change in the prevailing tone of philosophy and literature; in both, the State recognised the need of improvement by the creation of agricultural boards. From this point the histories of the two countries diverge rapidly asunder. The reasons of the divergence are sufficiently obvious. The French Revolution of 1789 was diametrically opposed to the agricultural convulsions which changed the face of rural England in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. France offers no parallel to the commercial exigencies which in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries required the home production of wool, and evicted crowds of small farmers from the land to make room for the shepherd, his dog, and his flock. So again the circumstances under which the French and English Revolutions took place were widely different. The population of France remained stationary, while that of England increased at the rate of geometrical progression; the one country, confronted by the practical problem of

making bread and meat for the million, concentrated her energies on the wholesale production of corn and cattle ; the other, opposed by no such difficulty, developed a different system of land tenure and of farming. The effect of the French movement was to tighten the peasant's hold upon the land, of the English to tear it from his grasp.

Population, then, is the factor which has mainly determined the course of agricultural development in England and in France. The contrast between the private enterprise of England and the State intervention of France is due to the different directions which the same all-powerful cause has given to farming. At home the Church, and subsequently great landlords and large tenant-farmers, revolutionised agriculture ; in France the Church and the State have been the chief pioneers of improvement. Where properties are large, State interference is rarely necessary, because enlightened self-interest generally coincides with public policy. But among a mass of ignorant owners minute, isolated policies prevail, and the State alone regards larger interests. At the close of the eighteenth century the existence, not merely the commerce, of England imperatively demanded large holdings, owned by capitalist landlords, and let to capitalist tenants. By this means only, when no foreign produce supplemented native resources, could the soil supply food to its vast population. France has felt no such overwhelming pressure of population ; no inexorable law of

demand and supply has divorced her peasantry from the soil. In England, for public purposes, the State favoured the growth of a small class of capitalist landlords; in France the State sacrificed the few to the many, and promoted the increase of small owners who stand on the border-line of pauperism. In England the State leaves agricultural improvement to private enterprise; in France, the State supplies the capital and direction in which her land-system is wanting. It would be a tedious task to describe minutely all the means by which in France the State discharges the duties which arise out of her agricultural policy. But there are not wanting signs that the French system of land-tenure may, before many years are past, become, to a certain extent, the English system. From this point of view a brief summary of some of the leading features of State aid appears necessary.

In France, as in Germany, Italy, and the United States, agriculture is recognised as a department of the administration. Elementary agriculture is taught in primary schools, where children learn to distinguish between plants, grasses, and soils; often a plot of ground is attached to the school, which serves as an experimental farm. The school teachers are supplied with training in the subject by departmental professors, who, under the orders of the Minister of Education, give courses of lectures in the *écoles normales*. The rest of the system of agricultural education falls

under the direction of the Minister of Agriculture. Three classes of schools are provided—(1) the *fermes-écoles*; (2) the *écoles pratiques* or *régionales*; (3) the *écoles nationales*. The fabric is crowned by the Institut Agronomique, which was removed from Versailles and reconstituted at Paris in 1876.

The *fermes-écoles* are numerous and useful; among them are those of Trois Croix, near Rennes (Ille-et-Vilaine), St. Gauthier at Domfront (Orne), Nollac (Haute-Loire). Many of these primary agricultural schools were founded by private enterprise after the Restoration, but in October 1848 they were recognised as part of the administrative system of the State. Lads enter these farm schools as apprentices, not as pupils. They must not be over sixteen at the time of entrance; they are fed and treated as labourers; they go through a course of two or three years, and at the end leave the school with a certificate which qualifies them to act as bailiffs. If they show any decided aptitude, they may obtain a bursary at one of the *écoles nationales*. The cost of each farm pupil to the State is about £10; the State also defrays the expenses of the salary of the director and his assistants. The director obtains the labour of the pupil for nothing, and manages the farm for his own profit and at his own risk.

The *écoles pratiques* are assisted and superintended by the State. It was intended that these should be distributed among the twelve agricultural regions into which France is divided. These

agricultural high schools are designed for the sons of the wealthier class of cultivators. The cost is from £16 to £20 a year. The pupils learn practical agriculture and the elements of physics, chemistry, natural history, botany, veterinary science, and stock breeding. They did not, in the first years of their establishment, prove particularly successful.

The three *écoles nationales* are placed in the centres of three districts of France. They are Grignon, near Versailles (Seine-et-Oise); Grand Jouan, near Nozay (Loire - Inférieure); Montpellier (Hérault), formerly La Saulsaie (Ain). All three schools were founded before the Second Empire—Grignon in 1827, Grand Jouan in 1832, La Saulsaie in 1840. They were all of them adopted by the State in October 1848. Grignon is a huge brick building of the seventeenth century. It was given by Napoleon to the Duke of Istria, and bought from his widow by Charles X for an agricultural college. Auguste Bella was the first director. The course of instruction lasts two and a half years; and each year is divided into two terms, the first from October to March 15, the second from March 15 to August. All the pupils are obliged to pass the entrance examination, unless they have previously taken the degree of *Bachelier ès-Sciences*. They may be either *externes* or *internes*. The *externes* pay £8 a year for their lectures; the *internes* pay from £40 to £44 for their board, lodging and lectures. There are

bursaries in each of the three colleges, which are filled up by open competition among the pupils of the farm schools. The Institut Agronomique, which crowns the fabric, forms a faculty of agriculture.

Besides these schools of the general practice and science of agriculture, there are special schools such as sheep, cheese and dairy farms, the gardening establishment at Versailles, the school of drainage and irrigation at Lézardeau near Quimperlé, the three veterinary schools of Lyons, Alfort, and Toulouse, and the horse-breaking schools like that near Caen. In 1879 departmental professors were appointed, whose duties are twofold. Under the direction of the Minister of Education they lecture at the normal schools to pupils who are being trained as schoolmasters; under the instructions of the Minister of Agriculture, they hold conferences in each canton with the agriculturists, teachers, and proprietors, perambulate all the country villages to observe agricultural processes, keep in touch the various local societies, and spread the knowledge of improvements. By the law of June 16, 1872, each department is to be provided with a Professor, and their agricultural duties were minutely defined in a circular of M. Tirard in 1881.

Agricultural shows and competitions, as well as horse-races, are encouraged by the State. The great central show is held at Paris; but, for the promotion of provincial competitions, the whole

country is divided into twelve regions, Algiers forming a thirteenth. These *concours régionaux* are under the direction of the State, which gives the prizes and pays the expenses of the judges. Agricultural societies have been formed under State patronage for the departments, the arrondissements, and even for the cantons. Veterinary science is a subject to which the State pays great attention. There is a veterinary officer attached to each arrondissement, who has passed through the four years' course at one of the three veterinary schools, and has received the diploma entitling him to practise. The powers of the veterinary officers are considerable. All the foreign live stock is subjected to a veterinary examination at one of the points at which it is permitted to be imported, and only sound animals are allowed to enter the country. Internally the existing law contains most stringent provisions for the slaughter of infected cattle. State indemnities are granted to owners of slaughtered animals. The State interests itself in the breeding of horses, cattle, and sheep. The Ministry of Agriculture contains, for instance, a Directeur des Haras, who has under him inspectors-general and inspectors. At the Haras du Pin there is a free school, in which is taught every detail connected with the management of horses. There are twenty-one dépôts of the great Haras de Pompadour; and more than 2,500 stallions are placed at the disposal of the owners of mares.



Nor is the State aid confined to education and the improvement in live stock. Each *arrondissement* has its *Ingénieur des Ponts et Chaussées* who assists proprietors in all drainage operations. In each *arrondissement* again there is the *agent voyer*, who inspects the roads of the district in his care. There are three different classes of roads, the *chemin vicinal*, *départemental*, and *national*. The first class is kept in repair by the *Communes*, the second by the *Department*, the third by the *State*. It is the duty of the road overseer to assess the expenses of the repairs.

Lastly, the State assists works of irrigation, reclamation, and similar improvements, indirectly through the *Crédit Foncier*, and directly with subventions and loans. It has facilitated means of transport, subventioned the erection of bridges in place of the old ferries, assisted canals, railways, and roads. It has aided in works of irrigation like those of Verdon (*Bouches-du-Rhône*), St. Martory (*Haute-Garonne*), Lagoin (*Basses-Pyrénées*), La Bourne near Valence. It has helped to improve barren wastes by such means as winter submersions in the valleys of the *Durance*, the *Arc*, and the *Isère*. It has attempted to replant the forests, and so check the ruinous floods so common in the mountainous districts of the Alps. It has assisted in the reclamation of La Sologne, the barren tract of heath and furze or sandy wastes diversified with marshy ponds, which formerly belonged to the *Orléannais*, and now makes up part of the Depart-

ments of the Loir-et-Cher, the Cher, and the Loiret. Thirty years ago the district was a desolate, thinly populated plain, soppy as a sponge in winter, dry as a cinder in summer, and so unhealthy that the average length of human life was only twenty-seven years, inhabited by a stunted race whose stupidity passed into the proverbial saying of *un niais de Sologne*. The State set on foot drainage works, cleaned out the watercourses, introduced marl, planted pines, and set an example which has been followed by many proprietors. So, too, it has aided to drain the district of the Dombes (Département de l'Ain), where grass alternates with water, and cattle with fish, and to bring into cultivation the *landes* of Gascony by pine plantations. Private companies, working with concessions from the State, reclaim bays of the sea on the west coast, and convert the marshes into polders; thus in the bays of Mont St. Michel, des Veys, and Bougeneuf, thousands of acres have been reclaimed by the Compagnies des Polders de l'Ouest and de Bouin.

The agricultural histories of France and England run parallel for centuries, and then diverge in opposite directions. We have already traced the course of development which French agriculture has followed, and alluded to one aspect of the different results which have been attained—namely, the contrast between private enterprise and State intervention. Another result is represented by the absence of peasant proprietors in the one country and their presence in the other; another

by the uniformity of English, and the variety of French, land-tenures. It remains to glance at these last two points, to investigate the condition of the peasant proprietary of France, and to inquire which of her land-systems has best stood the strain of agricultural depression.

France and Corsica contain, roughly speaking, 132,000,000 acres. How is this property cultivated, and how divided? Both questions are difficult to answer. French statistics are often handled by English writers with very little caution. Thus, no account is taken of whether Corsica is, or is not, included. Or again, in comparing the produce of 1840 and 1852 with that of 1862 and 1873, it is often forgotten that, by the annexation of Savoy and Nice, France gained an increase of nearly 3,000,000 acres, and that, by the Treaty of Frankfurt in 1871, she lost rather more than this through the surrender of Bas-Rhin and parts of Haut-Rhin, Meurthe, Moselle, and Vosges. By the annexation she acquired backward provinces; by the surrender she lost some of her best cultivated soil. It is therefore easy, if these facts are not taken into account, to establish a marked retrogression in agriculture between the years 1862 and 1873. Again, in estimating the produce of different classes of crops, several stumbling-blocks arise. Thus, under the head of "farineux" are included not only the ordinary cereals, but chestnuts and potatoes, which cover an area of more than  $3\frac{1}{4}$  millions of acres. Again,

in the returns for 1840 and 1852, mountain pastures are not included under the head of productive land ; in the returns for 1862 and 1873 they are so included. Again, in calculating the number of owners, it must be remembered that the number of *côtes foncières* supply an illusory test, since several *côtes* may be the property of the same proprietor. Lastly, the word *parcelle*, on the increase of which English opponents of peasant proprietorship are apt to base their charge of the pulverisation of the soil, gives rise to ambiguity. Its meaning, as a term of land-surveying and of law, is not necessarily a small plot isolated from its neighbours and belonging to a different proprietor ; it does not always imply a different ownership, but only a division and a different cultivation. Even those who bear in mind these pitfalls find statistics a difficult subject, and I can only vouch for the approximate truth of the figures given below.

Reducing *hectares* to their rough equivalents in English acres, these 132 million acres are thus distributed :  $65\frac{1}{2}$  million acres are arable ; the extent of cereal crops is about 40 million acres, of which wheat occupies 17 millions, and the remainder is distributed between barley, oats, rye, maslin, buckwheat, maize, etc. There are  $18\frac{1}{2}$  millions of grass land ;  $6\frac{1}{2}$  million acres devoted to the culture of the vine ;  $3\frac{1}{4}$  millions appropriated to gardens, orchards, chestnuts, mulberries, olives, and almonds.  $93\frac{3}{4}$  million acres are agriculturally productive. The remaining  $38\frac{1}{4}$  million

acres are thus disposed of: woods and forests, 21 millions; marshes, mountains, bogs, barren lands, 11 millions; lakes, rivers, watercourses, meres, and pools,  $1\frac{3}{4}$  million; finally  $4\frac{1}{2}$  million acres are occupied by towns, roads, etc.

The classes who own or cultivate this land are very various. But one remarkable feature deserves notice, because it presents so great a contrast with England, namely, the proportion which the rural population bears to the total population of France. At the close of the eighteenth century Lavoisier estimated that fourteen millions out of twenty-five were engaged in agriculture. In 1851 the industrial classes numbered 83 per cent. of the total population, and 56 per cent. were agriculturists. In 1876 the industrial population had risen to 90 per cent., and 53 per cent. were engaged in the cultivation of the soil. The classes of which this large rural population is composed consist of landowners and tenant-farmers, including *métayers*, *domaniers*, and *maîtres valets*, and labourers, whether hired by the week, the day, or the year.

The first important question which arises is: How is the landownership distributed? In 1842 the population of France consisted of 33,000,000 souls or 7,000,000 families. Of these 7,000,000 families, 5,500,000 possessed land; 5,493,000 enjoyed annual incomes ranging from 3*l.* to 400*l.*; the remaining 7,000 derived incomes from their estates exceeding the last-mentioned sum. M. de Lavergne calculated in 1862 that  $37\frac{1}{2}$  million

acres were owned by 50,000 owners whose estates averaged 750 acres;  $37\frac{1}{2}$  millions by 500,000 owners whose estates averaged 75 acres; and  $37\frac{1}{2}$  millions by 5,000,000 who held properties averaging  $7\frac{1}{2}$  acres. In other words, that one-third of the land was held by 50,000 owners, one-third by 500,000, and one-third by 5,000,000. The statement is too neat and clear-cut to be absolutely true. Yet, so far as the number of small proprietors is concerned, it is substantially confirmed by the calculations of M. Bochin in 1871, and M. de Foville in 1884. M. Bochin reported to the Société des Agriculteurs that 14,000,000 names were entered for the land tax, and that, if 5,000,000 names were struck off as duplicates, the soil would be found to be divided between 9,000,000 proprietors, of whom  $5\frac{1}{2}$  millions, the exact figures named by M. de Lavergne, are medium-sized and small proprietors. Half of this last class, added M. Bochin, are in a state bordering on destitution, paying no direct taxes, and even receiving parish relief. Thirteen years later M. de Foville divides properties into five classes: (i) very small, below 7 acres; (ii) small, from 7 to 15 acres; (iii) middle-sized, from 15 to 125; (iv) large, 125 to 500; (v) very large, above 500. He proceeds to show that, roughly speaking,

Class (i) occupies  $10\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the whole land of France.

„ (ii)	„	$15\frac{1}{4}$	„	„	„
„ (iii)	„	39	„	„	„
„ (iv)	„	19	„	„	„
„ (v)	„	$16\frac{1}{4}$	„	„	„

Thus we may say that  $64\frac{3}{4}$  per cent., or two-thirds, of the whole land of France is held by proprietors of small or middle-sized estates, ranging from below 7 acres to 125 acres.

It is very difficult to group the departments by the size of properties; yet, if it could be done, interesting light might be thrown upon the conditions necessary for the existence of peasant proprietors. The greatest proportion of large properties is to be found in two regions; the one situated in the south, south-west, and south-east, the other in the central districts upon the borders of the Loire. Thus, in the Hautes-Alpes 69 per cent. of the properties are over 300 acres; the Cher comes next with 54 per cent.; the Bouches-du-Rhône third, with  $53\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. In the Basses-Alpes, Alpes-Maritimes, Hautes-Pyrénées, Pyrénées-Orientales, Basses-Pyrénées, Hérault, Ariège, Lozère, properties of 300 acres average from 30 to 50 per cent. of the whole. So again, to take a central district, in Loiret, Cher-et-Loir, and Indre, from 40 to 50 per cent. of the properties are large. The southern zone of large properties consists in whole or part of mountain and hill. Here, it might be supposed on the analogy of Wales or the New Forest, was the locality best adapted to the peasant proprietor, because here he has rough pasture for his live stock. But as a matter of fact the rough pasture is nearly always let to Provençal shepherds, who come up with their caravans of sheep for the

*transhumance*, which lasts for six of the summer months. This remark applies strongly to Hautes-Alpes, which stands first in the proportion of large properties, for it contains the famous mountain pastures of Orres and Vars. Cher stands second on the list, and may be taken as a representative of the central district of large properties. Here again is a country covered with wide expanses, called *brandes*, in which wild heath, sandy wastes, and marshy pools preponderate. It was one of the favourite hunting districts of the French monarchs. Here are situated the proverbially barren tracks known as La Sologne and La Brenne; here, too, are fed the flocks of Berri, which are the sheet-anchor of the country, as is testified by the arms of Bourges—three rams argent on a field azure, with a shepherd and shepherdess as supporters. Bouches-du-Rhône, the third on the list of high averages, contains two large districts wholly unsuited to peasant farming. The first is La Crau, a dry, treeless, uninhabited plain, on which some 200,000 sheep cower in the winter before the mistral, and pick up a meagre livelihood before the *transhumance*. The second is the Camargue, a district which is repeatedly flooded. Like La Crau, it is largely given up to flocks of sheep, which, during submersions, have a right of asylum (*droit d'esplèche*) on the first-named plain.

The departments in which large properties are rarest are the following: Gers, Charente, Haute-Loire, Manche, Lot, in which only 6 to 10 per



cent. of the properties exceed 300 acres ; and Charente-Inférieure, Rhône, Tarn-et-Garonne, and Seine. It is impossible to assign any general reasons for the relatively large number of peasant proprietors in these departments. In each different locality much depends on the character of the soil and climate, the special crops, the rate of agricultural wages. Thus, for instance, in Manche, with its unrivalled pastures, its ready markets for eggs, poultry, and butter, its fruit orchards, and its domestic industries, peasant proprietors flourish. Owing to the amount of grass and to the decrease of population, but little agricultural employment is provided. Consequently wages are very high, and self-farming is profitable. The same remarks apply to the neighbourhood of Paris, where the rural population is attracted into the city, and where market-garden produce commands a ready sale. In Rhône, again, where manufacturing industries abound which give employment to thousands of peasant proprietors, tenant-farming is unprofitable, while at the same time the market is good, and the peasant supplements his earnings in the muslin works of Tarare, or some of the numerous manufactories of Givors. So, lastly, Charente-Inférieure is well suited to a peasant proprietary. Its soil varies between the reclaimed marshlands of La Rochelle and Rochefort to the valleys and gently undulating plains of Saintes, the well-wooded district of St. Jean d'Angely, or the heathy ground of Jonzac. Peasant proprietors,

who number considerably more than half of the adult male rural population, are to be found in the richest districts, where, besides the vine and the ordinary cereals, hemp, flax, fruits, and garden vegetables are grown in great abundance. There is also a large trade carried on in horses. One farmer breeds the colts, the other buys them at six or eight months and sells them at two or two and a half years old. Lastly, every farmhouse has its still for the manufacture of spirits; large quantities of oil are extracted from walnuts; and the paper works on the river Touve employ thousands of artisans who are also small land-owners.

It appears, then, that in purely agricultural districts, where hired labour is cheap, or in mountainous and barren tracts, peasant proprietors do not thrive. On the other hand, the system of small farms worked by their owners succeeds wherever population is dense, labour dear, manufacturing industries abundant, and markets good for garden stuff, dairy produce, or poultry. The absence or presence of peasant proprietors depends on certain conditions of success, without which no peasant proprietor is eager to buy the land. They will not thrive wherever they are planted, a fact which is often overlooked by theorists who point to the French peasant as a proof that owners of land will make gardens out of deserts. The fact is, no French peasant makes the attempt where it appears useless. If he can command some specially

fertilising substance like the seaweed which the Breton peasant collects, or if he enjoys exceptional advantages of climate like that of Roscoff, his industry and energy know no limits, and he will in a few years transform a wild coast into a *ceinture dorée*. But it is not inland,—on barren moors of heath, ling, broom, and stunted pine,—that he thrives or even exists. A closer review of French farming will prove the point that the presence or absence of peasant proprietorship depends on the presence or absence of some essential conditions of success.

Compare the district round Yvetot and that near Neufchâtel, both in Seine-Inférieure. The first is a sheep pasture, the second a rich grass country; in the one, one-fifth of the landowners are peasant proprietors, in the other seven-tenths. Again, the most barren district in Maine-et-Loire is the country of Baugé and Segré; the richest is the vicinity of Saumur. In the first, large properties and *métayers* are the rule; in the second, half the land is owned and tilled by peasant proprietors. In Mayenne, where cattle breeding is extensively practised on a large scale, there are only 25 per cent. of peasant proprietors to 26 per cent. of *métayers*, and 49 per cent. of tenant-farmers. In Finistère, on the other hand, where the peasant has reclaimed a country, which fattens a quantity of stock on the rich plain of the Léonais, which possesses the *ceinture dorée* of the coast and supplies the peasant with fertilising manure, the Breton will give anything for land:

53 per cent. of the farmers are peasant owners cultivating estates averaging  $16\frac{1}{2}$  acres; 41 per cent. of the remainder are tenant farmers, and 6 per cent. are métayers. The Department of the Indre contains three distinct regions—the Boischaud, Champagne, and Brenne. The first district is comparatively fertile; the second and third are unproductive, barren, or marshy tracts, where the chief product is sheep, and at nightfall the only sound to be heard for miles is the cry of the curlew or the bark of a sheepdog. In Boischaud, seven-tenths of the land is owned and tilled by peasant proprietors; in Champagne and Brenne large estates are almost the universal rule. Again, in the Department of Saône-et-Loire, the Mâconnais, which is the richest district, contains 90 per cent. of small owners; the Autunois, which is almost the poorest, has only 25 per cent. The two great corn-growing districts of France are Beauce and Brie. The first is an arid, unwatered plain, where sheep and cereals alone can be produced, where natural pasture is hardly to be found, and where high farming is necessary. There the peasant proprietor is practically extinct. Brie is a well-watered tract, which in a dry season grows more wheat than even Beauce produces in a wet year. It abounds in large farms, but in the grassy valleys are numbers of small peasant proprietors who till their own plots and eke out their earnings by hiring themselves out as labourers, by rearing calves, or by dairy produce and market gardening.

On the other hand, such districts as Creuse, Puy-de-Dôme, Franche-Comté, and Champagne may be quoted against my contention. But, in point of fact, these apparent exceptions prove the point. Thus, the Creuse is a barren district, purely agricultural, in which wages are cheap, and peasant proprietors enormously preponderate. But it is to be noticed that here every peasant proprietor enjoys common rights, and thus he is enabled to exist. Yet here and throughout Auvergne, in which commons are numerous, the peasantry could not exist on their land. For nine months every year the Marchais leaves his home and hires himself out as a stonecutter or a mason; so also, for the same period, the Auvergnat emigrates in search of employment as a chimney-sweep, a scavenger, or a porter. Their wages enable the family to live during the winter, and, if necessary, to buy out brothers and sisters, and so avoid the *partage forcé*. These districts are often quoted, it may be observed in passing, as instances of the bad farming of small proprietors. This is unfair to the peasant. The farming is really done by the old men, the women, and the children; the stalwart youths are rarely at home during the months of agricultural labour. Again, in Franche-Comté there are upwards of 90,000 holdings, only 800 of which are above 100 acres, and 50,000 are under 12 acres. Yet the district is mountainous, and, therefore, apparently militates against my contention. The explanation is, that

the mountains are not let to Provençal shepherds, but are the common lands of the upland villages, and that every peasant plies a trade. Many parts of Champagne consist of bald, bare, dusty chalk hills, which are naturally unproductive. Yet no country possesses more small farmers, owning the land they till. The inhabitants are clustered together in villages, standing a considerable distance apart, and the pastures are held in common. Only the land which stands close to the village is well farmed. As you recede farther from the hamlet, the cultivation deteriorates, and at the boundaries it is miserable. Every one of the village inhabitants is entitled to keep sheep in proportion to the acreage of his freehold ; and every morning the common herdsman gathers the live stock and guides them to the common pastures. It is by these common pastures that the peasant farmer holds his own, when he would starve on the produce of his arable plot.

The condition and prospects of the peasant proprietor afford agricultural writers a favourite theme. In France the system has its opponents as well as its advocates. One school of writers, founded by Arthur Young, urge that the plough is the only effective instrument of national prosperity, and that any land system which turns arable fields into spade-wrought gardens is not only deleterious but deadly to the health of a State. Gardens are valuable auxiliaries to comfort, but it is only by a broad system of agriculture that nations are fed.

In the end it is said that the inevitable result of the *partage forcé* will be either to check the population or to divide estates by logarithms. The argument is supported by the positive decrease of the Norman peasantry who secure the advantages of primogeniture by unigeniture, or by the pulverisation of land in districts like Chalonnès on the Loire, where each estate is so minute that the proprietors enjoy it for a year turn and turn about. In the one case the country is denuded of its strength, and every year grows weaker relatively to foreign nations ; in the other this crumbling (*émiettement*) of the land renders the soil a mere sand-heap of disconnected atoms. These arguments of opponents are strengthened by other considerations.

The peasant proprietor is miserably lodged. He has often only a single ground-floor room, entered by a door which is the common entrance of the cowhouse and the kitchen. In this room, divided by a mere partition from the stable, the family cook, eat, sleep, live, and die, sharing the accommodation the house affords with the cow, the pigs, and the poultry. In many parts of rural France the cowhouse and stable are separated from the dwelling ; but even then the house consists of one large ground-floor room, which is kitchen, dining-room, and bedroom in one, for the farmer, his family, and perhaps his hinds. The solitary window, for the iniquitous door and window tax offers a premium to the worst ventilated dwelling, is stained and dimmed with dirt, spotted with the excrements

of flies, decorated with cobwebs which prove that the window has not been opened in the memory of man. The floor, too uneven to be swept, is made of beaten earth or ill-fitting flags. At the door is a festering mass of rotten straw, a shallow cesspool as it were, into which stable, cowhouse, and pigsty are drained, and on to the top of which is thrown the filth of the house.

Again, the peasant proprietor is miserably fed. His food varies with the district, and also with his disposition. He might eat better food, but such is his parsimony that he makes a pleasure of self-denial rather than denies himself a pleasure. In Brittany many of the peasants live on porridge made of buckwheat without milk, potatoes, rye bread, and buckwheat pancakes without butter. If they are a little better off, they add milk and salt butter, and pork and cabbage two or three times a week. Their drink is water or cider. In Normandy, on the other hand, food is good and abundant; at its worst it consists of *galettes* of maize with a little bacon, butcher's meat once a week, and cider. In Anjou the farmer is well fed, and the peasant proprietor and the hired labourer share the same simple abundance. In Touraine all classes can enjoy abundance of food. The hired labourer expects, if fed on the farm, to have meat once a day; he turns up his nose at mutton, and prefers white wine to red. In the central districts of France chestnuts are the staple diet of the rural population. In Berri, Marche,



Limousin, and Auvergne, chestnuts are first placed in a well-heated room, then skinned, and boiled in a very small quantity of water, covered closely in and steamed so as to retain their flavour ; they are then converted into a sort of porridge or paste and eaten hot. This diet is eked out with bread made from buckwheat or rye, and potatoes when the latter are not all wanted by the pigs. Chestnuts are also *l'arbre à pain* in the Cevennes, and are said to be more nutritive than potatoes. The position of the peasant, thus miserably lodged and poorly fed, is said to be precarious and perilous. He is a proprietor only in name. The real owner is the moneylender, and the peasant proprietor is a veritable serf. So fierce is the *soif du sillon* that, to gratify it, the peasant raises money at ruinous rates to buy land. He never expends a loan on improvements, but rounds off his possession by an additional purchase. No doubt this charge is in the main true. In some parts of France the mortgage debt is said to be 80 per cent. of the value of the land. On the other hand it should be borne in mind that the general average is only 16 per cent.

Again, it is said that the peasant is badly educated. He has never learned to read himself, and having prospered without education denies it to his children. Besides, he requires his boy to drive the teams, his daughter to herd the sheep. The average of persons above six who can neither read nor write in France is, speaking roughly, 30 per cent. Doubs (Franche-Comté) is the best edu-

cated of the departments, with a proportion of only 6 per cent. unable to read or write. The lowest proportions are—Haute-Vienne 61 per cent., Finistère 56 per cent., Indre-et-Cher 54 per cent., and Allier and Nièvre 49 per cent. Haute-Vienne and Indre-et-Cher are two of those central provinces of France which possess a considerable proportion of large properties; and here *un niais de Soologne* has passed into proverb. Allier and Nièvre are distinguished for the prevalence of métayers and tenant-farmers; nearly half the rural population of Finistère are tenant-farmers holding under the *domaine congéable*. Haute-Saône, Doubs, and Jura are essentially districts of peasant proprietors; yet Doubs is the best educated department of France; Jura stands fourth on the list, and Haute-Saône ninth. In Champagne the peasant proprietor preponderates, and the people are so proverbially stupid that *quatre-vingt-dix-neuf moutons et un Champenois font cent bêtes*. Yet the average of the departments of Marne and Aube show only 12 per cent. who are unable to read or write. Again, in the northern provinces and in Normandy, where the country is tilled by peasant owners, the number of those who can neither read nor write is far below the general average of France. It is therefore impossible to show that the peasant proprietor is worse educated than the ordinary cultivators of the soil. It is perfectly true that he is illiterate; he seldom or never reads a newspaper, and cannot keep accounts;

but he is remarkably shrewd and intelligent. Every faculty of his mind is sharpened and kept bright by repeated bargainings for the sale or purchase of agricultural produce. At the same time he is trained in habits of industry, self-denial, and frugality. He may be poor, but he is rarely miserable; he is independent, and his lot is never hopeless. As a citizen he is far better equipped than the English agricultural labourer, who is vastly his superior in literary accomplishments. ✓

Insufficient food, wretched accommodation, heavy mortgages, and a low standard of education, are no doubt evils to which the peasant proprietor is exposed; but they are by no means the inseparable conditions of his existence. There are, as it appears to us, more formidable arguments based on the operation of the *partage forcé*, which secures the permanence of the system while it aggravates its possible dangers. Thus, the law of partition subdivides the soil by a blind mechanical law on no principle of supply and demand, and without regard to the fitness of the owner for the management of the land. If a partition is demanded, it must be made; a will which leaves to each heir a separate compact estate, however equitable the division, is as invalid as one that leaves to one coheir the land, to another the equivalent in personalty. The effect of this arbitrary creation of a plurality of owners is very often to waste the estate in litigation, or force the land on the market, when it either ruins the owners

by producing too little or their neighbours by producing too much. It divides the estate into such minute strips that there is not space to employ a full-sized spade. A turn of the plough on the wrong side for a single season robs one man of his property or doubles that of his neighbour. Trêspasses are necessarily frequent, and behind them follows litigation. Revolutionary legislation has added fourfold to the truth of the feudal maxim, *Qui terre a, guerre a*. It splits up the estate into separate and often distant plots, so that each individual proprietor owns several scattered parcels. Hence arise a loss of productive soil by the number of fences and unprofitable roads, a waste of time, and an increase of expense by the necessity of carrying implements, crops, and manure from point to point. Thus subdivided, distinct properties are so interlaced that agricultural progress is checked, and cultivation reduced to one level, and that level the lowest. To such a length is pulverisation carried, that a peasant proprietor is ruined by a single adverse season. His capital is exhausted, and he sinks from a landowner into a hired labourer. Between 1826 and 1835, for instance, half the landed properties in the kingdom changed hands ; and half of these changes were due not to gifts or inheritances, but to sales, forfeitures, or exchanges. The land thus passes rapidly from hand to hand ; it is *terre volante* ; immovable property circulates more frequently than movable ; it is invested in as a

speculation ; it is treated almost as if it were stock to be bought and sold on 'change.

Again, it is alleged that the tendency of a peasant proprietary is to revert to the rudiments of civilisation. Co-operation and division of labour cease. The peasant tries to produce all that he wants upon his farm ; to have a plot for his vineyard or apple orchard, a piece of arable for breadstuff, a meadow for his cow. It cuts him to the heart to buy. Consequently he often ploughs up land which is best suited by nature for pasture, and thus wastes the natural advantages of the soil or climate. Lastly, it may be urged that compulsory division leaves no adequate authority, and no clearsighted public interests. In a mountainous district, for instance, like the neighbourhood of Embrun, it is no one's business to clear out watercourses, and a single goat may cause an inundation. Mountain torrents strew the plains with pebbles spreading outwards like a fan, and threatening to convert an Arabia Felix into an Arabia Petræa. The evil is to some extent met in such cases by State interference, and by the powers vested in the Préfet, under certain circumstances, to form a syndicate for works of drainage, irrigation, and protection against floods.

Other arguments may be urged on the score of agriculture against the system ; but I do not consider them established. It is, for instance, said that the peasant proprietor is an obstacle to high farming. He cannot keep the best stock ; he has

not land enough for sheep ; he cannot afford to grow wheat. But the soil of France, like that of England, is no longer young ; and the question is whether intensive farming is not the best method by which an old country can supplement the supplies it draws from virgin soils ; in other words, whether the French peasant proprietor who with unremitting toil and infinite patience concentrates his energies on agricultural produce, which is naturally protected by its rapidly perishable nature, is not steering a better course than the tenant farmer who competes with new countries in the production of corn, beef, and wool. Of most of the troubles which beset tenant-farmers, peasant proprietors have little experience. Farms of any size are difficult to let, especially if they range above 150 acres. But the small farmer lives by his butter, his market garden, and his poultry-yard. His eggs are collected by hucksters or *cocotiers*, who carry them to the central dépôts to be packed. From an English point of view, the subdivision of land is excessive ; but we have not the same variety of soil, climate, and crops, which complicates the agricultural question in France.

But it is urged that, though the *partage forcé* may not yet pulverise the land, it must do so eventually ; and that then the impoverished peasant proprietor will find that there are no employers of labour, but only small owners as poor and miserable as himself. In theory, this result seems inevitable ; in practice, it does not necessarily

follow. The outcry against small properties had commenced twenty years before the Revolution; to them agricultural societies then attributed the backward condition of farming. The sale of large corporate and private estates, and the distribution of common lands among the commoners seemed to intensify the evils of a system which the *partage forcé* perpetuated. It was not till after the Restoration that compulsory subdivision began to be dreaded. Previously pulverisation was checked by foreign wars; civil law made a man a landowner, military law marched him off to Austerlitz or Borodino. Yet equal partition had already begun to produce some bad results, for in 1826 the Government issued a manifesto offering special facilities and reduced fees to all landowners who wished to surrender their estates through inability to pay the land tax of 10*d.* an acre on their estates. Since that period, however, the peasant has not merely retained, but extended his hold upon the land; he has saved money, and, except in rare instances, has checked pulverisation “au point,” to use the words of Benjamin Constant, who foretold the fact, “au delà duquel il deviendrait funeste.” How has he achieved these results?

The peasant has extended his hold upon the land mainly at the expense of middle-sized estates, which are too large to be worked by the labour of the proprietor and his family, and become unprofitable if tilled by hired labour. Large estates

have for the most part remained intact. French landlords rarely have the bulk of their property in land, and family arrangements are easily effected among the rich. The peasant has also saved money. He has made his small holding pay because he does not hire labour, or grow corn, or depend upon wool. He is a market gardener, a vinedresser, a florist, a dairyman, and a poulterer. He grows certain special crops which require incessant and minute attention, for which the soil and climate of the country offer him facilities. He rears little or no stock. He feeds calves for the veal market ; he either breeds or breaks in mules and horses ; he sells his colts as soon as they are weaned, or at two and a half years old ; and this division of labour places a profitable industry within the reach of the small peasant owner. Lastly, he has avoided, except in cases which scarcely affect the question of farming, the pulverisation of the land. Parcels have recently increased very slowly, and within the last three or four years they have positively decreased. This seems to show that the peasant is not so hungry for land as to buy it when its produce is comparatively valueless, or to split it up into liliputian estates which cannot be tilled at a profit. Often the peasant is attracted away from the land by high wages or the delight of town life ; he is not unwilling to sell his land and seek his fortune in trade. In Normandy he preserves his estate intact by instinctively practising the principles of Malthus,



of whom he has never heard. In the north several small proprietors throw their land together and let it as a single farm to one of their number or to a stranger, under whom they work for wages. Sometimes one of the coheirs carries on the farm, paying rent to his brother and sister, or the two latter abstain from marriage and live under his roof, working as hired labourers. Difficulties are doubtless experienced when partitions of land are insisted upon, which result in numbers of interlaced plots belonging to different owners. But exchanges are more frequent since these partitions are no longer taxed as double sales, and the Government might still do much more for their encouragement. Without infringing upon the essential principles of the *partage forcé*, it would be possible to permit the head of a family to leave his personalty to one coheir and his realty to another, provided that they were of equal value, or to render exchanges compulsory for the consolidation of the various estates on the demand of two-thirds of the owners.

So long as peasant owners are able to supplement their agricultural gains by industrial wages, they are especially prosperous. Thus the weavers of Elbœuf, the ironworkers of Conches, the cotton-stuff workers of the valley of the Andelle are not only artisans, but farmers, market gardeners, or florists; in the summer they are harvesters or hay-makers. It is this combination of agriculture with manufacture which constitutes an important ele-

ment in the happiness of Normandy. So again, Saumur has its enamel factories, Tours its silk fabrics, Le Mans its tinned vegetables, Angers its slate quarries, Cholet its cheap handkerchiefs, Laval its sacking and sailcloth, and in all these cases the artisan is also a peasant proprietor. In Vaucluse numerous industrial enterprises employ men who also possess small plots of land, such as madder, flour, and oil mills, silk spinning, brick and tile yards, and limekilns. So also the people of the Pas de Calais and the Somme are largely employed in local manufactures which supplement their agricultural earnings. So also in Franche-Comté the peasants are turners, lapidaries, electroplaters, wood-carvers, and spectacle-makers. The same remark holds good of the Nord with its high farming and dense population. It must be remembered, as was pointed out at the outset, that manufacturers are less concentrated in cities than they are in England. If there are no manufacturing industries in the locality, peasant proprietors like the Auvergnat, the Limousin, or the Nivernais, migrate in search of work for nine months of the year. In other districts the small landowners work alternately for one another. Thus in the Basses-Alpes they eke out their profits by *moneta forestiere*; in Hérault they are day labourers who till their own plots of land, or as their patois expresses it, *font l'impéraou* out of working hours; in Hautes-Pyrénées they hire themselves out for daily wages; in Tarn-et-Garonne the *pagés*, as the peasants are

called, work in harvest times as *estivandiers* and *solatiers*.

The peasant proprietor has suffered comparatively little by agricultural depression. Employing no hired labour, and growing corn only for his own consumption, he has not been, and hardly can be, affected by foreign competition. But for the tenant-farmer the agricultural crisis is hardly less serious in France than it is in England. The proof lies on every side. Forced sales of stock and rural bankruptcies are numerous; disputes are rife respecting claims to unexhausted improvements; farms are difficult to let, rents are falling, population migrates into the towns, land decreases in value. It no longer pays to grow wheat; flockmasters get nothing for their wool; American pork undersells French produce; the florist of Angers complains of his Belgian rival; the madder of Vaucluse is beaten out of the field by indigo. Wages are rising in a falling market; labour is not only scarce and dear, but it has deteriorated in quality. The younger generation is not, it is said, like the old; lads go off to seek fortunes in towns, or cannot endure, after the gaiety of barrack life, the monotony of the country. Girls will not work like their mothers, but become dressmakers or shopgirls. In France, as in England, politico-economic questions are chained to the car of party politics; no one dares to investigate the principles which regulate commercial dealings. In France, as well as in England, a new privileged class

has been created, that of the *rentier*, who escapes the taxation which crushes the agriculturist. As in England, so in France, through railway rates are said to favour the foreigner ; and in both countries the cry grows louder that the cheapest loaf becomes the dearest, when no one has money to buy it. If French tenant-farmers have suffered less than their English brethren, it is because the land has never been called upon to produce two gentlemen's incomes, and because large employers of labour are never ashamed of the blouse and the sabot.

It is the tenant-farmer renting a large farm, employing hired labour, and growing corn and beef for sale and not for home consumption, who has suffered most by agricultural depression. One noticeable result of bad times is the increase of *métayage*. It is admitted by many agricultural writers that on this system landlords and tenants have got most out of the land, and have suffered least from the recent distress. The proof lies in the fact that not a few tenant-farmers have lately preferred to take on their farms as *métayers*. If *métayage* is indeed the land system of the future, or even affords a temporary shelter from the storm, some few remarks may be usefully offered upon the shape which the tenure now assumes in France.

Like every other system of agricultural tenure, *métayage* has been greatly abused. Strong prejudices have been created against the system by the writings of Arthur Young and Mill, who

studied the tenure in its most debased conditions. Before the Revolution, land farmed by tenants was almost universally let to *métayers*; in the north and north-east alone the tenure was exceptional. Even at the present day there are scarcely any departments in which the system is not to be found, and it prevails extensively in the centre, west, and south of France. Mayenne is the most northern department in which *métayers* are numerous. Twenty-six per cent. of the land is cultivated by peasant proprietors; 49 per cent. by tenant-farmers; 25 per cent. by *métayers*. In Finistère, 6 per cent., in Morbihan, Côtes-du-Nord, Ile-et-Vilaine 3 per cent. of the cultivators of the soil are *métayers*. In the Department of the Sarthe they number about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. In the Nord and the Pas de Calais their numbers do not amount to more than  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the farming population. In Eure-et-Loire (La Beauce), out of an adult male agricultural population of over 70,000, there are not 300 *métayers*. In Maine-et-Loire *métayers* are more numerous, especially in the wild *bocage* districts of Baugé and Segré, where their numbers exceed 7,500. Farther south they grow more and more abundant. In Creuse, for instance, the land is cultivated by *métayers*, or peasant proprietors, or village communities; the English tenant-farmer is almost unknown. In the department of the Allier, which includes part of the Bourbonnais and Basse-Auvergne, nearly two-fifths of the landholding

classes are *métayers*. South of the Garonne, except on the East and in Ariège, tenant-farmers are altogether outnumbered by peasant proprietors and *métayers*. Half the Landes is in the hands of *métayers*; the Gironde contains 19,000 *métayers* against 4,000 tenant-farmers; in Tarn-et-Garonne there are 9,000 *métayers* to 700 farmers.

*Métayage* has altered for the better since it was condemned by Arthur Young and Mill. In details the system varies with every district; the main features remain the same. Landlords and tenants combine to stock a farm; the tenant tills the soil, and manages the live stock under the direction of the landlord; the profits are divided as the interest on their respective capitals. The theory is admirable. It applies co-operation directly and simply to agricultural industries; it forms an association of capital and intelligence with labour, of practice with science; it brings to bear on both partners the strongest motives of self-interest. So long as landlords were resident the system succeeded, because the *métayer* worked under the eye of his partner. But when estates were too small to offer inducements to landlords to adopt a country life, or large enough to support them as courtiers, the system was grossly abused. Landlords resided in towns because town life offered more distraction to the wealthy, or more professions to the poor. They knew nothing of farming, abandoned the sentiment of their position, looked upon their land as so much capital realising

a certain interest, and generally handed it over for fixed payments to bailiffs, who sublet to the *métayers*. This middleman, frequently a solicitor, was, like his employer, a citizen. He knew too little of farming to improve the yield from the land, and yet was determined that it should yield three rents. The terms of the tenancy grew more harsh, and the contribution to the stocking of the farm (*cheptel*) more niggardly. No artificial manure was used; the plough was that of Triptolemus; the cropping antiquated and barbarous. The *métayer*, never receiving any advice or instruction, surrounded by other tenants as ignorant as himself, plodded on in the footprints of his ancestors, content if he could avert starvation from himself and his family. With his land and farmbuildings he was given a *cheptel*, consisting of eight oxen for the plough, half a dozen lean, wretched, inbred cows, a small flock of sheep, and two or three sows. All the animals were dwindling to half their proper size. Two-thirds of the land was arable; an unmanured meadow occupied one-tenth of the farm; the rest was left, with the assistance of broom, heath, or gorse, as coarse pasture. The land was incessantly cropped for potatoes, buckwheat, maize, barley, rye. The *métayer's* own contribution to the stock was about a fourth of that of the proprietor—two carts, two or three wooden ploughs, two harrows (also of wood), the harness of the oxen, sickles, hoes, and other implements.

Within recent years the system has been revolutionised. Divisions of property compelled landlords to reside on their estates, supervise the letting and management of the *métairies*, and dispense with farmers or middlemen. If landlords are interested and skilled in agriculture, the system offers exceptional advantages. The tenancy is not inherently aggressive ; it does not lend itself so readily to the reclamation of land as a peasant proprietary ; it is rare to find *métayers* who have reclaimed land. But where the landlord is ready and competent to take the initiative, the tenure has achieved wonders. It doubles the capital, entrusts to the brains the direction of the enterprise, and supplies the incentive of self-interest to the labour.

One condition of success is that the farm should not be too large to be cultivated by a single family. If hired labour is employed, the conditions of the tenancy become complicated by the question of wages, and misunderstandings frequently arise. The size of an arable *métayage* farm varies from thirty to seventy acres. In vine-growing countries the holdings are smaller. The land is generally let on lease for three or six years ; afterwards the tenure is renewed by the *tacite réconduction*, subject to a six months' notice to quit on either side. Far more capital is put into arable farms by both the partners. Formerly the value of the landlord's *cheptel* rarely rose above £40, and the tenant's contribution often fell below £10. Now



both parties often contribute from £70 to £100 apiece, besides the capital which the landlord has sunk in the improvement of his land. The *métayer* pays a necessary rent, which represents half the land tax, half the seed corn, the rent of his house and private garden, his use of potatoes, milk, and wood, and the profits of his poultry-yard, the larger share of interest on invested capital which belongs to the landlord. This rent varies from 1s. to 2s. an acre. Subject to the deduction of this sum, or its equivalent in kind, the profits or produce of the farm are equally divided. The landlord contracts to keep the buildings in repair, to maintain the fire insurances, and to pay the taxes. The *métayer* agrees to keep the fences and implements in good order, to till the soil and tend the stock *en bon père de famille*. All forage crops grown on the farm are to be consumed on the premises; the milk is set aside, in the first instance, to rear the calves—the surplus belongs to the *métayer*. The cattle and other live stock are valued at the commencement of the tenancy; at the close of each year, or at the expiration of the lease, the profit or loss is shared between the partners. All the expenses of cultivation fall upon the *métayer*. The course of cropping, the sale and purchase of stock, and the general plan of management are determined by agreement between the partners; in case of dispute the landlord's will prevails. In vine-growing districts the *métayer*, *bordier*, or *méger*, is often rather a

*maître valet* than a *métayer* proper. The proprietor finds a *vigneronnage complet*, that is land, vines, buildings, implements, utensils, pays half the taxes, and defrays half the cost of the straw and poles; the tenant undertakes the culture of the vine, the vintage, and the operations of wine-making. The profits are divided upon terms which vary with each contract. The essential difference between the *métayer* and the *maître valet* is that the latter contributes nothing to the joint enterprise except his labour. He is a *métayer* in embryo; he occupies a lower step in the social ladder. He takes a farm for a year, and cultivates the soil under the direction of the landlord. He is paid a fixed sum of money, and a fixed proportion of the produce. He also shares in the success of the farm, receiving, for instance, a tenth of the fleeces or of the increase of the live stock. The system is very common, not only in the vineyards but on the arable farms of the south. Very often farms are taken by associations of *métayers* called *personniers*, or by companies of *maîtres valets*, who work under the supervision of their leader, or *bourrat*. Some of these associated farmers have cultivated the same land for many years in succession; and when they break up, the farm is generally taken on by one of the old association.

*Métayage* is the most important, but by no means the only, modification of the ordinary relations of landlord and tenant which prevail in

France. Two of the others might be studied, if space allowed, in their bearing upon the Irish land question. The *domaine congéable* of Brittany still finds supporters, and prevails extensively in Finistère. Of the *droit de marché* of the Picard farmer, with its dark tale of agrarian crime and outrage, and its immemorial practice of boycotting land-grabbers or *dépointeurs*, I will only observe, as a coincidence, that it must have been familiar to every divinity student of Douai or St. Omer. But, for practical purposes, the condition and prospects of peasant proprietors and *métayers* are of greater interest to English agriculturists.

No one will deny that the system of peasant proprietors is socially advantageous. It affords a training to the rural population for which we in England have found no substitute. It checks the centralisation of pauperism, the overgrowth of population, and the migration into towns. The element of stability which it contributes to the State is more valuable to the French than ourselves. There the towns are inflammable as touchwood, while the country ignites more slowly. Yet even in England it is useful to have a class of slow-thinking men, who will answer political firebrands with 'Cela est bien, mais il faut cultiver notre jardin.' But, while conceding the advantages of a peasant proprietary, we cannot ignore the difficulties which beset its artificial creation. The poverty and misery or the wealth and happiness of French peasants are often exaggerated, in the

interests of politicians or of theorists. I have endeavoured to show that the small owner is not superior to the ordinary conditions of agricultural success. He will not thrive wherever he is planted, or exist on land which starves a rabbit. The chief conditions of his prosperity do not exist in England. We have few commons, few domestic industries, no union of agriculture with manufacture, few special crops for which his minute labour is peculiarly adapted. Some of these conditions can be created; but it is well to bear in mind what is entailed in the legislative establishment of a peasant proprietary, as well as to recognise the duties which such a system throws upon the State.

Finally, I have drawn attention to the *métayage* system, because it has in France proved the best shelter for tenant-farmers against the agricultural storm. The capacities of the tenure have been severely tested, and it has not broken down. This fact should at least remove the prejudices, based on obsolete conditions, which are entertained towards *métayage*. The English farmer has lost the whole or the greater part of his capital. *Métayage* suggests a means of uniting capital and labour, self-interest and intelligence, in the cultivation of the soil. But the experiment must necessarily fail unless implicit confidence exists between the landlord and his working partner.

## TENANT-RIGHT AND AGRARIAN OUTRAGE IN FRANCE

NOTHING is new under the sun. Ireland enjoys no monopoly of agrarian outrage; she cannot even boast the invention of boycotting. France affords a proof that land hunger alone, whetted by no race hatred or religious prejudice, can so transform the character of a peasantry that they shrink from no crime against a legal system which they regard as tyrannical and oppressive.

In the ancient province of Picardy every feature of Irish land agitation is reproduced, and has prevailed for centuries. The *droit de marché* of Picardy corresponds more or less closely to the tenant-right of Ireland, and both have treated the law of the land as a dead letter. In France the combat began at least as early as 1679. Without intermission, from that day to this, law has been defied and its administration baffled by secret coalitions among tenant-farmers, by boycotting, incendiarism, destruction of crops, breaking of implements, maiming of cattle, mutilation of horses, assassination of land-grabbers, and all the familiar forms of agrarian terrorism. Special legislation, enforced by the most despotic of governments, failed to stamp out the illegal

custom for which a handful of tenant-farmers were contending. Fines, martial law, suspension of local tribunals, extraordinary powers vested in royal officials, billetings of soldiers on suspected villages, imprisonments, executions, transportations, only acted like water on burning oil: they spread the area of disaffection. The tenant-farmer has triumphed; to-day Picardy is as peaceful as a humdrum English county. What was the nature of the disturbance? How has the pacification been achieved?

The centre and heart of the agrarian outrages to which the *droit de marché* has given rise are the districts of Picardy known by the sinister title of Sangterre or Santerre, forming a portion of the Department of the Somme. It includes the arrondissements of Péronne and Montdidier, together with the canton of Corbie in the arrondissement of Amiens. Here are clustered most of the numerous villages, such as Belloy, Bouchoire, Lihons, Rouvry, which boast the addition to their names of "en Santerre." The greater part of the district lies in a niche between three railways, bounded on the north by the line from Amiens through Nesle and Ham to Tergnier, on the west by the main line from Amiens to Paris, on the south-east by the branch line from St. Just through Montdidier, Roye, Chaulnes and Péronne to Cambrai. It is a great rolling plain, traversed by the departmental road from Amiens through Roye to Noyon. Though it nowhere rises above

400 feet, it forms a tableland, furrowed by numerous valleys, the channels of little streams which create the peat bogs for which Picardy is famous. The cultivators of the soil are congregated in villages : detached farmhouses or farmbuildings are scarce. No hedge is to be seen for miles, and, except round the villages and by the side of the roads, there are but few trees. Before the crops are cleared, the billowy tumult of the corn lends a charm to the landscape : but after harvest the district wears a singularly melancholy aspect, with its monotonous outlines, confined horizon, and solitary expanse.

Santerre possesses no coal-fields and no important manufactures. Stocking-weaving flourishes in the neighbourhood of Montdidier, and Péronne carries on some trade in cotton prints. But practically the district is purely agricultural. The land is chiefly arable, though Moislains, the largest village in the canton of Péronne, is surrounded by some fine pastures. The soil varies widely in quality. The best is an *argile douce* mingled with sand ; the medium is a sandy clay mixed with a species of Oxfordshire "stone-brash," known by the local name of *cornu* ; the worst is a marl which nothing but incessant labour will render fertile. Of the nine cantons which form the arrondissement of Péronne, the largest proportion of poor land is to be found in Bray and Péronne ; and it is in these two cantons that the *droit de marché* has been enforced in the most exaggerated form. The best land is found in

Roissel, Combles, and Nesle, where the *droit de marché* is comparatively restricted. The soil is cultivated in holdings of various sizes. Small farms of between 10 and 75 acres are tilled by the owners who, in addition, often occupy land as tenants; middle-sized farms range from 100 to 500 acres; a few large farms rise from 500 to 1,500 acres. Speaking generally, land in Santerre is now divided in equal proportions between these three classes, with an increasing preponderance in favour of the smallest class.

The term *droit de marché* is derived from the *marché*, or lot of land which forms the object of a lease, or from the same word used in the sense of the primitive contract on which the right is by some supposed to depend. It may be translated as tenant-right. By it the tenant-farmer means three things: his claim, subject to the payment of his annual rent, to a perpetual enjoyment of the *marché* or plot of land which he occupies; the power to dispose of his *droit* to his representative by sale or will; and, if the land comes into the market, the right of pre-emption. He denies the landlord's right to let or sell the holding over his head, to evict him for another tenant, to raise his rent, or refuse the lease to his nominee. He only recognises the rights of the nominal owner by paying an annual rent, and certain premiums for the admission of new tenants or the renewals of old leases, called respectively *intrades* or *pots de vin*.



A landlord has a farm to let. The land is not free land, but is subject to the tenant-right. The owner of the land has no voice in the selection of the farmer; the new tenant is the representative of the late occupier, from whom he has first acquired the tenant-right by purchase or inheritance. This nominee of a third person on entering into possession pays to the landlord a sum of money called the *intrade*, which is generally equivalent to a year's rent, and is payable whenever the farm changes hands. This payment is, so to speak, the premium for the tenant's investiture. On some estates another sum, called *chapeau*, or *pot de vin*, is payable whenever the lease is renewed.

The *intrade* varies in amount with the relationship which the incoming tenant bears to his predecessor in title. Thus, a stranger acquiring the tenant-right by purchase, pays more than a collateral descendant; the rate is almost nothing in the case of a tenant in a direct line of descent. The new tenant is, as has been said, the nominee of the former occupier; he has acquired from him, whether by purchase or inheritance, the tenant-right with all its accessory privileges. Theoretically, the purchase-money paid for the tenant-right represents the value of the tenant's interest in the land after satisfying the landlord's claim for rent. It necessarily varies in amount, and fluctuates with the rise or fall in rent or agricultural prices. This perpetual readjustment of the balance is practically

neglected; it is the weak feature of the system, and the point in which tenant-right has been most abused. Certain communes of the canton of Péronne, notably Brie, Bouvincourt, Mons-en-chaussée, and Estrées-en-chaussée, have distinguished themselves by the extravagance of their claims. Landlords have been powerless to raise the old rents of half a century ago. Consequently, in 1836, the value of the tenant-right was estimated at nearly three-quarters of the value of the land. On the other hand, it must be remembered that the soil of this canton is for the most part of so poor a quality, that it can only be rendered profitable by unremitting toil. In other cantons farmers have allowed rents to follow the rise in prices. The value of the tenant-right throughout the whole district of Santerre ranges from 500 to 1,200 francs the hectare. Free land sells for about £40 the acre. The tenant-right may, therefore, be calculated as between a quarter and a half of the value of the land.

A farmer has purchased from his predecessor his tenant-right; he has paid the landlord his premium; he has taken a lease. What is his position? Leases are generally for nine or eighteen years; but, whatever clauses are inserted to provide for the surrender of the farm at the expiration of the specified term, the tenant considers himself as a co-proprietor of the land. He has acquired a right against all the world, a right which he can transmit to his representatives or successive lessees

of the farm on the conditions contained in the original lease. Of this joint ownership he considered the payment of rent in kind to be a sign; at the present day he pays in money, but the amount is calculated upon the market price, on certain days, of a fixed quantity of corn. The landlord has parted with all control over his property: he cannot choose his tenant; he cannot raise the rent, or enforce new conditions. The landlord receives his *pots de vin*, *intradés*, and rent; but the tenant regards these payments as entitling him to the hereditary enjoyment of the land, and as conferring the power to dispose of his farm by will, sale, gift, or sub-lease. In Picard phrase the tenant says of the farm, *ch'est à Dieu et à mi*, and treats it accordingly. Jealous of his independence, he often conceals from the landlord even his name. The rent or the *intrade* is sometimes paid by third persons, and the receipt is drawn in blank.

Before the Revolution landlords could always re-enter upon their land when a lease had expired, and cultivate it themselves. Tenant-right only protected the farmer against his own class. When the landlord grew tired of gentleman-farming, he was bound to re-let the farm to the representatives of the original tenant whom he had dispossessed. In 1867, even after the lapse of twenty years, men were willing to pay 150 francs the hectare to purchase from the evicted tenant his vague prospect of re-entry. So long as landlords

could dispossess tenants, fixed terms were necessary for the protection of the latter. It is under this moderate form that the *droit de marché* exists in parts of Santerre, and in the arrondissement of St. Quentin. But in the greater part of the district the farmer has now protected himself against his landlord as well as against his neighbour. Since 1789 tenants cannot be dispossessed even by owners of the soil who want to cultivate it themselves. Commercial interests have, in fact, changed the quarter from which farmers anticipate danger. A new peril threatened tenant-right when land speculators bought up land, which was sold at a low price because it was subject to the tenant-right, dispossessed the tenants, and threw the intermixed holdings of which the old farm consisted into one large colza, wheat, or beetroot farm. In former days there was little risk of the landlord taking into his own hands a farm which was made up of small detached parcels, and on which there were no farmbuildings. He had little or no inducement for the necessary outlay of capital. The Santerre farmer only feared that his neighbours might outbid him, and annex his holding to that which they already occupied. Another privilege, which is of infinite value to the tenant-right farmer, is the right of pre-emption. When land was offered for sale, the tenant-occupier claimed the first offer. No purchaser would bid till he had exercised his option. The principle of the tenant-right is now confined to land. But it

once extended to everything which could form the object of a contract of letting and hiring. Thus, places in the market, or seats in church were transmitted in perpetuity, and could not be acquired except with the consent of the last occupier. Similarly, ploughmen, threshers, reapers, and shepherds claimed a hereditary right to retain their situations in their families, or to nominate their successors, and boycotted employers who engaged strangers.

When once tenant-right has been acquired, farmers leave it by will, divide it among children, give it by way of dower, sell it to strangers by public auction or private bargain, make it the subject of contracts embodied in legal form by notaries. It forms an item of account in bankruptcies, liquidations, or inventories for valuations. It confers upon tenants rights of pre-emption, perpetual possession of their farms, powers to sublet, as well as to refuse increased rent or the insertion of new conditions. In defiance of the Code Civil, it creates a species of *droit d'aînesse*. Whichever of the sons carries on the farm is treated as the eldest. To him alone brothers and sisters can sell or lease their shares of the land; and if he purchases the portion of a sister, custom compels him to pay only half-price. The right links together the tenants in the closest possible union, binding them to abstain from competition for each other's farms, to punish traitors, to conceal the perpetrators of agrarian crime, and to help one

another in time of need. The extent to which this last pledge is recognised is illustrated by a story which Devérité tells in the Supplement to his "Essai sur l'Histoire de Picardie" (London and Abbeville, 1774). A farmer was hanged for the murder of another who had outbid him for his farm. The village council determined that the wealthiest bachelor should marry the widow of the murderer, and that a wedding present should be provided by the community, and "la chose fût exécutée." Yet this tenant-right, which is thus openly dealt with, and which confers such important privileges on its owners, appears to have no legal existence. By the legislation of December 1790, all tenancies of a perpetual nature were abolished, and they were at the same time rendered redeemable by the farmer. Tenants might convert their holdings into freehold, but after that date they could not continue to occupy under a permanent lease. The Code Civil renders null and void any disposition of property in perpetuity in favour of individuals. Thus, even assuming that before the Revolution, the right rested upon the prescriptive title of immemorial possession, it was abolished in 1790. So careful is the law to avoid even the appearance of recognising the legality of the *droit de marché*, that it refuses to assess it for purposes of taxation, and prefers to see the public revenue defrauded of a valuable source of income.

The growth of the tenant-right is an isolated phenomenon in rural France. It possesses no

title deeds, no charter; no public record, no private document can be produced in its favour; it can only appeal to immemorial tradition, and to the deep-rooted, inveterate, and almost universal feeling of Santerre. The origin of the usage is uncertain; even its age is a subject of dispute. Its opponents regard it as a recent invasion upon the landowner's rights; its advocates assign to it a legal or equitable foundation in remote antiquity. Some writers have treated the *droit de marché* as the object for which the *intrade* is paid. But the *intrade* is really the effect of which the *droit* is the cause. It is the compensation paid to the landlord for the loss of his rights. The choice of explanation lies between five theories that have been offered to account for the growth of the usage, each of which is supported by some special circumstance in the history of the province.

The great forest of Ardennes originally covered the whole district, spreading down to the shores of the Channel. Traces of it still linger in the line of forests which join hands almost from Calais to Paris, in the names of numerous villages, and even, it is said, in the word Santerre itself, which has been derived from *sarta terra*, or cleared land. The *droit de marché*, say some authorities, is the reward offered to tenants for the exceptional labour of clearing the land.

Somewhat similar is the explanation which traces the origin of the right to the necessities of cultiva-

tion, combined with imperfectly understood incidents of Gallo-Roman or feudal tenures. This wild forest land is covered with vestiges of the Roman occupation. It is intersected with Roman roads, which converged on the frequented seaports of the shores of the Channel. In the train of the Roman soldier followed the Roman farmer. Under the empire the "Colonus" was not a slave, but the owner of slaves: he held his land in perpetuity; he could not leave it, or be separated from it. He paid a fixed rent in kind, which could not be raised. Tenant-right, therefore, is explained as the recognition by the Frankish conquerors of this hereditary claim to the perpetual occupation of the soil.

Picardy is studded with ruins of religious houses and feudal fortresses, and some writers have seen in the *droit de marché* special payment made to peasants for manual labour in their erection. It was thus, according to tradition, that the Abbey of Lihons-en-Santerre was erected. Pioneers of agriculture, as well as backwoodsmen of Christianity, the monks induced their serfs to build their monasteries or clear the forest by granting perpetual leases of the reclaimed land. The example of the monks of Corbie was followed by the feudal nobility of Picardy. Some writers, therefore, see in the tenant-right farmers the representatives of the original grantees or proprietors.

Peter the Hermit, whose statue stands in the square at the east end of the Cathedral of Amiens,



was a native of Picardy. He drew from his native province the greater number of his followers. The piety of Picard Crusaders so enriched the country with relics that the word Santerre has been derived from *sancta terra*. Local tradition, which is almost universally prevalent, assigns to the Crusades the origin of the *droit de marché*. The popular explanation which is in the mouth of every peasant is that the feudal nobles raised money from their tenants to equip themselves for their expedition, and repaid the loan by granting to them the perpetual enjoyment of the land which they occupied. The explanation does too much honour to the scruples of the baron and the wealth of the serf. If the Picard saying may be used against this favourite theory of the Picard farmer—

Ce sont des contes  
De Robert mon onke.

No country has suffered more than Picardy from devastating wars. Fire and sword laid waste the district from the time of Brunehild and Fredegund. Pillaged by the Normans, ravaged by the English, devastated by the petty warfare of feudal barons, wasted by the contests of the Burgundians and Armagnacs, Picardy bore the brunt of the struggle between Louis XI and Charles the Bold; repeatedly invaded by the Germans, the Spaniards, or the English, it was plundered by the pandours of Prince Eugène, and the Cossacks of the allied

armies. The last shot fired in the war of 1814 was fired from the walls of Péronne. The origin of the *droit de marché* has been traced to the exceptional risks which attended agriculture in this border country of "Sang-terre." Advocates of tenant-right treat it as the bribe offered to induce farmers to face special dangers; opponents of the *droit* regard the perpetual wars as the opportunity which the peasant seized to invade the rights of the landlord.

Whatever may have been the origin of the right, it is at least remote. The earliest allusion to it in any French official document occurs in an edict published by Louis XIV in 1679. In the preamble to an edict of 1724 it is stated that tenant-right, originally claimed only over the lands of citizens, was now extending to the estates of the Church and the nobility. The document is sometimes quoted as conclusive in determining the date and character of the usage. But the question can hardly be settled on the evidence of a preamble which was intended to justify a legislation of ferocious severity. In the early days of agriculture rents were rarely, if ever, raised; farms were uninterruptedly occupied by members of the same family. It was not till the right was disputed that its existence was suspected. Towards the close of the seventeenth century the old order was rapidly changing. The feudal spirit was comparatively extinct. Provincial nobles flocked to Paris, where their finances were speedily exhausted;

retainers were less valued than cash. The history of other provinces proves that the *Grand Siècle* was the period during which landlords endeavoured most strenuously to assert their nominal rights. The attempt to raise the rent brought the landlord at once into collision with the tenant-right; it revealed the nature of the farmer's claim. The popular tradition of the Crusades may be of little value as evidence, but its antiquity is important.

The language of the preamble to the edict of 1679 shows that the organisation to enforce the tenant-right was already too firmly established to yield to the ordinary laws. Many of the details of the right indicate its early origin, and confirm the view that it was founded partly on the exigencies of clearing forest-land, partly on the imperfectly understood analogies of the Gallo-Roman and feudal tenures. A remarkable feature of the claim is that one part of the same property is subject to it, while another remains exempt. In all forest countries land cleared by individual members of a village community was treated as "exsors"—i.e. not liable to the annual division. If the Picard tenant-right originated in these private clearings, the existence of tenant-right and free land side by side, as well as the prevalence of the same usage over the forest district of the north, are satisfactorily explained. When once the claim had been made, a larger share of the distractions of war, combined with the determined character of the Picard peasant, accounts for its

vitality. Like other men of his class, he was impervious to new ideas. He might love his priest; but he did not obey him in secular affairs. His only guides were *les anciens*, and the *on dit* of the market and the fair. Bignon, the Intendant of Picardy, in 1707, speaks of the people of Picardy as hard-working, frugal, deeply attached to the soil, slow, and obstinate. Local sayings confirm the character. The “*franc Picard*” is proud of his independence; the “*bon Picard*” is upright, simple-minded, straightforward; he is sluggish, for “*Picard, ta maison brûle!*” “*Fuche! J’ai l’clef dins m’poke.*” Yet “*les Picards ont la tête chaude*”; their passion, once aroused, is not easily allayed. The Picard is made of the stuff which offers an invincible resistance to the loss of what he regards as a right.

The Picard tenant-right is not only unrecognised, but proscribed by law; it can show no legal right for its existence; it only holds its ground by terrorism and compact coalition among the persons interested in its maintenance. Suppose that a landlord endeavours to extinguish the tenant-right—in other words, to emancipate his land from the tenant-right, and convert it into free land—he takes the opportunity of a renewal of the lease to alter the conditions of the tenancy and raise the rent, or even to evict the tenant in order to introduce a farmer of his own choice. The occupier of the farm enters the village inn, and utters the formula, “*Je n’ai jamais démonté personne; j’espère que personne me démontera.*”

From that moment the farm is boycotted. It is the proud boast of the district—"En Santerre on ne se démonte jamais." The occupier abandons the farm ; no new tenant comes forward ; the land falls out of cultivation. If a new tenant is brought in from a distance, or if a neighbour makes a bid for the land, without first obtaining the consent of the evicted occupier, the commune proceeds from passive resistance to violence. The new tenant is denounced as a *dépointeur*, or in Picard patois, *dépointeux*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The words *dépointeur*, *dépointer*, *dépointement* are found in the Supplement to M. Littré's Dictionary, where the meaning is explained as one who supplants another in his farm in defiance of the *droit de marché* of Santerre and elsewhere ; the derivation is given of *dépoint*—i.e. "faire quitter le point où l'on est." M. Jouancoux (*Études pour un glossaire étymologique du patois Picard*) adopts the accurate definition of the word which is given by M. Corblot, whose Picard dictionary was published in the "Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Picardie" (2nd Series, vol. i. Amiens, 1851). According to these authorities, a *dépointeux* is any one who makes a bid for another's farm. "*Dépointer* se dit d'un fermier qui, par un enchère, obtient une terre affermée jusqu'alors à un autre. Il existe dans le Santerre une espèce de contrat tacite qui interdit aux fermiers d'enchérir ou d'accepter le marché d'un autre sans son consentement exprès. Les rares infracteurs de cet usage sont appelés dépointeurs." Neither of these authors offers any derivation of the word. Many writers connect it with "disappointment," and translate it as a breach of faith. The true derivation is that of Du Cange : "*Depunctuare, depunctare, rei alicujus dominio et possessione exuere, privare, ab officio remove, nostris etiam dépointer.*" The word was added to the Glossary by Carpentier in 1766 (*Supplementum*), thus confirming the view that recent events had drawn attention to the tenants' claims. At Noyon the word is used by children of taking each other up in class : has lost its peculiar opprobrium, because there the tenant-right has disappeared.

No greater insult can be offered to a native of Santerre than to call him by a name which implies that he is a false brother, a traitor to his class. From this moment war is declared. If threats fail, men in masks or with blackened faces sow tares by night with the seeds of the *dépointeux*, break his implements, destroy his growing crops, mutilate his horses and cattle, burn his ricks, set fire to his buildings, fire shots into his house. Finally, if these hints are disregarded, the *dépointeux* is found "gisant au coin d'un bois, frappé d'une balle discrète." Men, who in ordinary affairs are the gentlest and most scrupulous, shrink from no crime against a *dépointeux*. He, and everything that belongs to him, are placed under an interdict. The farm labourers refuse to work for him; his sons can find no employment, his daughters no husbands, his servants no places; and the stain of a *dépointement* is irremovable. If his ricks or his barns are on fire, the neighbours assemble, and stand by with folded arms, refusing to render him any assistance. In 1860 two poor women helped a *dépointeux* and his family to extinguish the flames by carrying pails of water. They were compelled to leave the district. The law is entirely baffled. The perpetrator of a crime may be known to every one; his name may be on every lip; but no evidence can be produced. Instances are known in which witnesses, under the first impulse of horror or compassion, have given evidence; but in the law court, at the trial, they

have sworn that they know nothing, and were suborned by the authorities to give false testimony.

Agrarian crime courts publicity, as though to proclaim its open defiance of the law and its absolute sense of security. In 1780 a shepherd of Mesnil Bruntel took the place of another without compensating his predecessor ; a few days later he was shot as he was walking down the village street in broad daylight between two friends. In 1783 the curé of Dompierre, near Péronne, took his glebe into his own hands ; the following Sunday two hundred persons assembled at church ; the curé was shot at the high altar, and no one saw the shot fired. A few years later, at Villers Guislain, a farmer took his neighbour's farm. He was shot at church in the middle of the congregation. Again, no one saw the crime committed, and, at the inquiry, all swore that they had seen nothing. Every village has some similar tradition ; of later events they are more reticent. Between July 1775 and November 1776, in the district of Péronne alone, twenty-five crimes, "plus criminels les uns que les autres," were brought before the law courts ; in no instance was the criminal discovered. Besides these cases, numerous other crimes were well known to private individuals. In 1787 the Provincial Assembly of Picardy met. A memorial relating to tenant-right was read before a sub-committee, and finally discussed in the Assembly.<sup>1</sup> The delegates decided

<sup>1</sup> "Procès-verbal de l'Assemblée de la généralité d'Amiens," pp. 109-13 (Amiens et Paris, 1788).

to address the king to put down a system which was not only disastrous in its immediate effects, but dangerous to the most sacred rights of property. In 1810 a Code Rural was projected, and local committees were appointed to frame suggestions. Two of these committees, those of Douai and Liège, demanded the suppression of the right, which they characterised as “un odieux et révoltant abus.” At that very moment ten cases of incendiarism were before the Criminal Court of the North. The committee insist on the powerlessness of the executive to enforce the law. Justice was baffled not only by the impossibility of obtaining evidence, but by the sympathies of local tribunals. Vrély is a village near Rosières, where the Abbé of St. Eloi at Noyon possessed land. In 1779 the land was let to a *dépointeux* named Dangest. Within six weeks of his entry upon the farm, Dangest’s farmbuildings, ricks, and stables were burned to the ground. He took the hint, and threw up the lease. Five years later the Abbé again tried to raise his rents; the land was at once thrown upon his hands. He issued the statutory notices, and applied, under the existing law, to the tribunal of Montdidier to aid him in exacting the rent from the commune. They decided against him with costs.

It is easier to collect old instances of the system of terrorism than to cite modern cases. The weapon is partially laid aside, because it has done its work. Landlords as well as lawyers have



acquiesced in a usage which they are powerless to resist. In 1865 a landlord threw a number of small tenant-right holdings into a single farm, expended considerable capital on the erection of buildings and other improvements, and let the whole to a Belgian farmer. Four years in succession the crops were no sooner housed than they were burned. In 1870 they were only saved by being threshed in the open field. The landlord was compelled to come to terms with his evicted tenants. In 1845 the farmers of Bouvincourt refused to pay an increased rent. Judgment was obtained against them for the amount; it remained unpaid. Finally a company of soldiers was sent to enforce the payment. The villagers were armed, and had mounted an old cannon, captured from the Spaniards in 1636, upon four coach wheels. For many years the gun, which formed one of the *pièces justificatives*, stood in the corridor of the Palais de Justice at Péronne. The gun was removed by the Prussians in 1871, but the carriage still remains. In 1868 there were ten cases of incendiarism before the criminal courts which were attributed to the *droit de marché*. The two following instances occurred within the memory of a man little over fifty. At Chipilly, a village between Corbie and Bray, a landlord took his land into his own hands. His house and farm-buildings were burned to the ground. In the same neighbourhood, thirteen horses belonging to a *dépointeur* had their tongues cut out. Within

the last fifty years, in the neighbourhood of Péronne, a landlord re-entered upon a number of tenant-right farms, and cultivated them himself. The tenant-right demanded that, when tired of farming, he should re-let the land to the representatives of the original tenants. Instead of complying with the usage, he let them at an increased rent to the mayor of the commune. A few weeks later the mayor was found drowned in a well. Cases of violence are admittedly becoming rarer every day. The end which terrorism secured is now attained by more peaceful means. But there can be little doubt that, if the occasion arose, the Picard peasants would again deserve the title, which has locally belonged to them for centuries, of "metteux de feu."

Legislation failed to stamp out tenant-right. Yet the exceptional means adopted for its suppression were such as only a despotic government could frame or enforce. Special legislation against the *droit de marché* commences with the royal edict in November 1679. The edict first states the offence. Farmers refuse to surrender their farms, or to permit the rent to be raised, or the conditions of their lease to be altered; they dispose of the land as their own, by will, exchange, sale, or partition; they retain possession by a system of threats, violence, and outrage, of which, however, "il est presque impossible d'avoir des preuves." Existing law failed to check the abuse. Louis XIV had, therefore, determined to employ legislation of

an extraordinary nature and exceptional severity. His edict deals with two points, the passive resistance of boycotting and the connivance of local authorities. It renders the inhabitants of the commune in which boycotted land was situated responsible for the rent and cultivation ; it ousts the jurisdiction of local tribunals, and empowers the intendant of the province to deal with all crimes of an agrarian origin.

A second Order of Council, issued in June 1707, vests jurisdiction over all agrarian offences in a special commissioner ; orders all farmers who held land without leases and against the consent of the landlord, at once to surrender their farms ; forbids under heavy penalties all notaries to embody in legal documents stipulations relating to tenant-right, and calls upon them to furnish to the commissioner lists of all persons who, to their knowledge, claimed any such rights.

On November 3, 1714, another edict was published. It recapitulates the abuses of the *droit de marché*, and re-enacts, with increased severity, the provision of the edicts of 1679 and 1707. It gives remarkable extension to the system of responsibility. The evicted occupier was treated as a hostage for the safety of new tenants. If any violence was committed against the person or property of a *dépointeur*, the former tenant was held responsible. Without any proof of complicity, the intendant was empowered to throw him into prison, to keep him there till he proved his innocence, and, if

he failed to disprove his guilt within three months, to sell his property, and compensate the injured persons.

In March 1724 a still more severe edict was promulgated, renewing with increased penalties all previous provisions, and designed to cut at the very root of the *droit de marché*. Under the *ancien régime* tenants, holding land after the expiration of the term contained in their lease, were considered to have their lease implicitly renewed. This implied renewal (*tacite réconduction*) was now abolished in Santerre. All tenants were ordered either to obtain a formal renewal of their leases, or within three months from the date of the edict to notify their surrender of the farms. Those who continued to occupy the land without written leases were liable on the first offence to pay double the rent, on the second to imprisonment and transportation to the colonies with their wives and families. When land was thrown upon the landlord's hands by the surrender of a farm, statutory notice was to be given of the fact upon the church door. If no new tenant offered himself, the letting value of the land was to be estimated by experts, and half the rent was exacted from the former occupier and the remaining half from the commune. The commune was also held responsible for the cultivation of the land. Landowners and new tenants, with their properties, families, and servants, were placed under the protection of the former occupier and the commune. If any of the greater

agrarian crimes of murder or incendiarism were committed against them or their properties, and the perpetrator was not discovered, the former occupier, his wife, and his children, were to be thrown into prison; unless within three months his innocence was proved by the conviction of the guilty persons, he and they were to be transported to the colonies, and all his property was to be sold to make compensation. If the sum realised proved insufficient, the deficiency was to be made up by the commune. The wife and children of a man executed for agrarian crime, if living under the same roof at the time of the committal of the offence, might be arrested and transported to the colonies. The commune were required to render every assistance to the officers of justice, and the intendant was empowered to billet soldiers upon the inhabitants for an indefinite period.

New edicts in 1732 and 1747 filled up the gaps which were left in 1724. Decrees of October 1732 and October 1747, applied the principle of communal responsibility to minor agrarian outrages, such as the maiming of cattle, and the destruction of standing crops, trees, or agricultural implements. The commune was held responsible for all offences of this description, and was required to make compensation, and was further punished with double contributions to the *corvées*, militia, and other extraordinary charges.

This severe legislation was met by the peasants

with the savage energy of desperation. A proclamation of Louis XV, issued in 1764, extends the provisions of the preceding edicts to the greater part of the north-east of France. Yet the address of the Provincial Assembly of Picardy in 1787 proves that tenant-right continued to defy the law. Before any action could be taken upon their demands for severer measures, the Revolution had commenced. In 1810 no attention was paid to the suggestions of the committees of Douai and Liége, recommending a more Draconian code. A ferocious legislation, relentlessly enforced, failed to suppress an illegal usage which rested only on an agricultural basis, and was supported by no race hatred. No religious prejudice contributed to its vitality, for the Church lent its influence to the maintenance of law, and more than one curé was threatened or boycotted for advising his parishioners to submit. Law and fact were at open variance, and law proved as powerless to alter facts as the Pope's Bull to check a comet.

Tenant-right in Picardy is still a living force. Yet undoubtedly it exercises at the present moment a far less important and more restricted influence than at any previous period of its known history. What then are the causes of its decreased importance and of its present condition?

Fresh tenant-rights are now rarely acquired. Both the natural and legal causes of their growth have all but ceased to operate. Most of the land in Santerre which is available for farming purposes

has been already reclaimed. Yet the *droit de marché* still affords a ready means of compensating tenants for the labour of clearing forest land. A few years ago a landlord was anxious to clear 250 acres of wood. He cut down the trees, and handed over the land to a tenant to stub the roots, giving him a tenant-right, recorded in his lease, of 200 francs the acre. The practice and law of letting and hiring have also been modified by the Code Civil in a direction favourable to the tenant. Under the *ancien régime* leases were short. On Church lands in the arrondissement of Péronne the term was nine years, and any longer periods rendered the whole contract null and void. On lay lands the term was also nine years. Now leases run in Santerre for eighteen years. Not only were leases short, they were also precarious. They were governed by the Roman law maxim, "*Emptori fundi necesse non est stare colonum*"; and the proverb, "*Mort rompt tout louage*." In other words, if property changed hands during the continuance of the lease, the new owner might evict the tenant. Revolutionary legislation secured to the tenant quiet enjoyment during the continuance of his term. Article 1743 of the Code Civil confirms the law of 1791. If the tenant holds under a *bail authentique* (i.e. a lease executed between the parties before a public notary) or a lease for a fixed period, he cannot be dispossessed during the continuance of the term unless provision has been made to the contrary. The tenant

is now secure for nine, or even eighteen years. But, as Hector Crinon says, "How quickly the time comes round. And then there is a rise of rent, a *pot de vin* and a notary's fee ! Resistance is impossible, for the landlord holds the handle of the spade. Refuse the terms and you are evicted from the land your family has held for centuries, compelled to serve others as a farm labourer, or reduced to beggary." It is, by the way, to be regretted that the *Satires picardes* of Hector Crinon, himself a labouring man and a *haricotier*, have not been translated out of the Picard patois for the benefit of those who take too rose-coloured a view of the comfortable life of peasant proprietors. Undoubtedly an incoming tenant expends capital in the purchase of his predecessor's tenant-right, which might be more profitably employed on his farm. On the other hand, he gains security and length of tenure. Without the tenant-right, and under the old legal conditions, forest land in Santerre would never have been reclaimed.

While tenant-right is no longer reinforced from the old sources, it is constantly being extinguished. Land subject to tenant-right is sold or let for a third or a quarter less than free land. The old landowners of the district for the most part acquiesce in a burden which has descended to them, together with their property, from generation to generation. Many new purchasers, on the other hand, have bought tenant-right land at a



cheap rate, and sold it at the price of free land, or raised the rents to the level of the letting value of *terre libre*. Such cases have always provoked opposition; but some of the large sugar companies have defied the consequences of the tenant-right more successfully than individual landowners. On the other hand, M. Vion, who twenty years ago was one of the most widely known and scientific agriculturists of the district, gives evidence from his own experience of the respect which the best landowners show to the rights of their tenants. M. Vion's father was a tenant-right farmer at Lœuilly, near Péronne. He had bought the right from his predecessor in title at 600 francs the hectare. Several years ago the landowner was anxious to sell the land. M. Vion *père* offered 1,500 francs the hectare; a neighbour offered 2,100 francs—the price which the land would have fetched as *terre libre*. The landlord accepted the offer of M. Vion. Another instance fell within M. Vion's personal experience. He himself was not only a landed proprietor, but rented land of which he purchased the tenant-right. The land which he thus occupied was put up for sale. As the possessor of the tenant-right, he purchased it at 2,300 francs the hectare, instead of paying the price of free land, namely, 3,000 francs. Instances may be quoted in which the high-handed action of landlords has extinguished a burden on their property which the law regards as illegal. But for every single instance

of the kind ten cases might be alleged in which the *droit de marché* has been extinguished, either because the farmers themselves purchased the land over which they claimed the tenant-right, or because landlords redeemed the right by paying to the tenant-farmer an indemnity. Either way the *droit de marché* triumphs.

Before the Revolution the ownership of the soil was vested in a few large proprietors, many of whom were religious corporations. Now more than a third of the land is held by peasant proprietors. From this division of the soil spring two important consequences, each of which diminishes the importance of the *droit de marché*. Formerly farmers clutched their tenant-right with the convulsive grip of men who knew that, if it escaped their grasp, their last hold upon the land was gone. The soil was not only their one ambition but seemed their sole means of livelihood. Now they have seen more of the world. Land is repeatedly in the market. It costs a little more to become a peasant proprietor; but the tenant-right farmer improves his social position. Under the changed circumstances of landed property, the old system of terrorism is rendered impossible. The peasantry are divided among themselves. Defiance of the law by means of a secret coalition is difficult when the members of the union no longer form even a bare majority, and when men of their own class are arrayed on the side of order and interested in the maintenance of rights of property.

The redemption of tenant-right by landlords also became a frequent source of the extinction of the *droit de marché*. Many landlords acquiesced in the existence of the tenant's claim. They derived from it, especially in days of agricultural depression, important advantages. Their rent, *intrades*, and *pots de vin* were secured to them by the solidarity of their tenants and by the fear that non-payment would forfeit the tenant-right. Farmers are less unwilling than formerly to permit landlords to redeem the *droit de marché*. Legal and social changes diminished the paramount importance which once attached to the right. The opening up of the country by new roads and railways, the alteration of the old three-course system of farming, the introduction of new agricultural methods and implements, operated in the same direction. Small tenant-right farmers see new resources and new means of acquiring wealth placed at the disposal of large tenants, from which they themselves are debarred by the size of their holdings. Before the Franco-Prussian war French peasants hoarded their savings in holes in the floor; their loans to Government opened their eyes to the fact that land is not the sole or the most remunerative investment. They are more easily induced to sell their tenant-right, and embark their capital in farming on a larger scale, or in other enterprises which yield greater returns. But here again every redemption of the *droits de marché*, though it extinguishes the right, is a defeat for the law.

It is a practical recognition of a usage, the existence of which the law repudiates.

Another factor in the extinction of the *droit de marché* is the *droit d'aînesse*, which is opposed to the interests of the younger children. But too much weight may easily be attached to the influence of this last cause. No doubt the law of partition under the Code Civil stamps the creation of an eldest son as unjust to the remainder of the family. The factor is more powerful in theory than in practice. The *droit d'aînesse* of Picard tenant-right is in harmony with the deep-rooted sentiments of the people, and its operation is limited. It bears hardly upon sisters, because, if they sell to the representative of the family, their portions are docked of half their value; but in the case of brothers it only consists in the obligation to lease or sell their portions of the tenant-right land to the occupier of the farm. Considering the sacrifices which are daily made in rural France to evade the law of partition and keep together family land, little importance can, in my opinion, be assigned to the contrast between the effects of the law of partition and the custom of the *droit d'aînesse*.

Arguments might be founded upon the restricted area and decreased importance of the *droit de marché* to invoke exceptional legislation against tenant-right in Ireland. It is here only necessary to say that such reasoning would be founded on a misconception of the history of the *droit de marché*. Except in the few instances where landlords

succeeded in confiscating tenant-right, penal legislation can claim no share in the suppression of the farmer's claim. On the other hand, so far as the Code Civil indirectly sanctions the principle for which tenants contended, and facilitates the division of property and the growth of a peasant proprietary, it has greatly contributed to the extinction of the *droit de marché*.

The area and the importance of the *droit de marché* are diminished by the completeness of its success; every acquiescence by landlords in the principle of perpetual leases, every redemption by them of the tenant's claim, every purchase of his holding by the farmer at prices below those of *terres libres*, is a triumph for its principles. The executive did not require new powers; it only needed the means to make their existing powers respected. A handful of tenant-farmers resisted the ordinary law; though opposed to the most despotic government of the day and supported by neither race-hatred nor religious prejudice, they found it equally easy to baffle an exceptional legislation of extraordinary severity enforced with the most ruthless ferocity.

## A FAGGOT OF FRENCH FOLK-LORE.

**T**HERE are moments when even the most fastidious taste sickens of wheaten loaves and asks for barley bread—times when the appetite inclines to rustic fare, though it be seasoned with grey salt, served on a red tablecloth, and eaten with a two-pronged fork of steel. In such a mood some stray reader may not despise the rude traditions of unlettered peasants.

The legendary lore of France is rich. Nowhere does it better love to linger than around those Druidic remains which stud the north and west of France, and still hold the popular imagination enthralled with their fresh and potent spell. The sites on which these remains were reared are chosen with instinctive skill. Sometimes they overlook vast panoramas of open plain, standing on rising ground, whence the priest, at the summer or winter solstice, might catch the first glimpse of the orient sun, or whence sacrificial fire might call to sacrificial fire across the length and breadth of the land. Sometimes they lie by the sides of running streams, hidden in dark, deep-recessed, wood-clothed glades, where, remote from the profane gaze of the uninitiated, mysterious rites might be performed.

What were the distinctive purposes of these different megalithic monuments it is not now the object to inquire. Little light is thrown by the surface of the stones themselves on such a topic. After the lapse of centuries it is often difficult to distinguish the artificial work of tools from the natural effect of the constant action of water upon stone. Thus the *Pierre du Bénitier* near Villac (Dordogne), and the *Sabol an Diol* (Côtes-du-Nord) appear to bear shallow basins and channels carved upon their faces. Traditionally these hollows were receptacles for the blood of victims; but it is probable that, like several of the so-called Kist-vens, many were due to the continual dropping of the rain. On the other hand, from the number of stones which are thus distinguished, and from the regularity of the forms, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that many are artificial. Be this as it may, the most primitive of these erections, like the earliest Hebrew altars, were certainly virgin blocks<sup>1</sup> of unhewn stone, on which no trace of human labour could be found. The stones served as places of sacrifice and of burial, as temples, sanctuaries, landmarks, bounds, and, like the stones of Bethel and Sinai—so their common name of *témoins* implies—as pillars of testimony. In the ancient Eastern world similar stones passed from symbols of eternity and emblems of divinity

<sup>1</sup> In the parish of Bains near Redon (Ille-et-Vilaine) is a spot covered with stone monuments. It is called "Gwerchmen," literally "virgin-stone."

into gods themselves. So, too, in the degeneracy of Druidic Pantheism, upright obelisks first symbolised the forces of nature, and then received the worship of deities. Rude as they are, they were scarcely rougher than the statue of Venus at Paphos, which was nothing but a simple conical stone. Silent guardians of the secrets of the past, they baffle the inquiry of a curious age, and it is a true poetic instinct that has prompted the French peasantry to trace round them the magic circle of awe and mystery.

These grey granite masses, huge, unhewn, misshapen, are scattered over many districts of France. Among the wild scenery of Brittany they seem in strange, unconscious harmony with surroundings as savage as themselves. Here all is in keeping; they are at home; their presence is appropriate. But along the course of the Vienne, in the midst of the garden of France, they resemble Puritans at Whitehall in the days of Charles II. Unwelcome, unbidden guests, they watch with reproachful eyes the gaiety and abandonment of nature; uncouth intruders on the fertile soil of Touraine, they seem to reprove by their grimness the varied beauty of the land, the crystal brightness of its streams, the emerald verdure of its meadows, diapered with the tender green of vineyards, or coloured by flowering forests of fruit-trees. Yet here, too, though the setting is incongruous, and the effect is produced by contrast rather than by harmony, the impression they create is hardly less striking.



They do not stand companionless in their isolation from their surroundings. By their side, and like them records of powers that have passed away, is gathered a medley of remains whose associations condense into one glance the history of the land. Here stretches a Roman road advancing straight towards its goal, a fit emblem of the national genius of constructors who were diverted by no obstacle from their destined end; here stands a dismantled feudal fortress, round which memory and imagination may once again hear the shock of lance and the battle-cries of mail-clad warriors; here rise the arches of a ruined abbey—once the living tomb of human souls wrestling in penitential prayer with the passions and the promptings of the flesh. And the lesson they suggest is that which is contained in Arnold's lines:

Race after race, man after man,  
Have thought that my secret was theirs,  
Have dreamed that I lived but for them,  
That they were my glory and joy;  
They are dust, they are changed, they are gone!  
I remain.

Captive Rome, with her utilitarian products, still leads her captors into captivity. For the others, *on ne prête qu'aux riches*; material wealth is on the side of the modern world; the castle is a storehouse of artificial manure; the abbey is a granary; the Druidic stones themselves are a daily sacrifice to Macadam.

The most common forms of Druidic monuments

are *menhirs*, *dolmens*, *allées couvertes*, *pierres branlantes*, and cairns. Cromlechs, or, to use the mediæval term, *malli* are comparatively rare. They are, however, not infrequently found in Brittany, and are to be met with in Périgord and elsewhere. Such a *mallus* may still be traced near Marsac, in the neighbourhood of Périgueux, and traditionally the chief stone in the circle (*lo Peyro dans nau tours*) on certain nights turns round nine times.

*Menhirs*,<sup>1</sup> or *Peulvøens*, are single upright stones. In the charters and legal documents of the Middle Ages they are often referred to as landmarks and boundaries—*pierres de bornage* or *hautes bornes*. In the local administration of mediæval times they were, like the English shire oaks, important features—on one the lord of the manor distributed salt, on another justice. The people speak of them as *les palets*, *les minches*, or *les cailloux de Gargantua*; and, though the remark is in the nature of a digression, it is curious to notice how omnipresent is the name of the gigantic sire of Pantagruel. Mont St. Michel is a rock thrown by his father, Grandgousier, as a stepping-stone when he was on his way to England to help King Arthur; one of the white cliffs above Duclair, on the Seine, below Rouen, is Gargantua's pulpit; in the canton of Pontoise (Seine-et-Oise) is a huge *menhir* known as *le palet de Gargantua*; the rising ground on the plain of Montlevicq (Indre) is the mud that dropped from his *sabot*; near

<sup>1</sup> *Men* = stone; *hir* = long.

Clion (Indre) is a hill called *Le-pied-de-Bourges*, which fell from his foot as he was coming from Bourges at a single stride ; the *pierre Bise*, near Redon (Ille-et-Vilaine), was placed there by Gargantua ; the *pierre de la Mignon*, near St. Aubin du Cormier (Ille-et-Vilaine), was a stone which Gargantua carried in his pocket to defend himself from the dogs, as he went to visit his lady-love. Poitou literally bristles with his quoits, his ninepins, and his palaces. But, with this exception of Gargantua, it is rare to find in the local names of these stones any commemoration of mythical or historical characters, though there are the *Saut du Rolland* and the *Pierre des Huguenots*, both in the arrondissement of Fougères (Ille-et-Vilaine). The most curious record thus chronicled is in La Vendée. The cruelties of Soubise, the famous Protestant leader, who was finally defeated by Louis XIII in 1622, are there preserved alive in popular memory. As wolves are often called "Soubises," so his name is interchangeable with that of the devil, and *menhirs* may be equally called *pierres du Diable* and *pierres de Soubise*. It may be added that the site of his castle (Chaise-Giraud) is still haunted by his unquiet shade.

*Dolmens* are vast masses of stone laid horizontally and table-wise on two or more vertical uprights. In Berri they are still used as tables for the nocturnal feasts of the *Martes*, tall, hideous women, with long black hair, and flabby breasts reaching to their thighs, who invite the shepherds to their

embrace. The peasant of Périgord calls a dolmen in his patois *peyro-lévato*, or, sometimes, *peyro-lato* (i.e. *pierre levée*). One, in the department of the Dordogne, is called *le Cros de la Voige*, in allusion to the tradition that under it, during a terrific storm, a shepherdess was sheltered by the Virgin. Another is called *la Cabane du Loup*. In the wild picturesque district of Lozère they are known as *lou géoyon*, or the giant, or as *peyro-géoyondo* (gigantic stone). When one end only of the table reposes on its support and the other is buried in the ground, the mishap is in Berri attributed to the wilfulness of the giant, who thought that he could, alone and unaided, place the slab upon its legs.

When the dolmens are prolonged so as to form an avenue they are called *Allées couvertes*, or, in popular language, *Grotte aux Fées*, *Maison des Nains*, or *Palais de Gargantua*. In Brittany (Côtes-du-Nord) one is called *le lit de St. Jean*, and another (Finistère) *le lit de St. Roman*. Both are places to which barren women resort for superstitious practices.

Rocking-stones (*Pierres branlantes* or *tournantes*) were largely used for purposes of rural divination. They are also known by the more popular name of *Casse-noisettes* (Périgord—*casso nousillo*).

Lastly, there are heaps of stones, *galgals*, or cairns. In Roman times similar cairns were sometimes raised at the turning-points of roads or on the summits of hills, in honour of Mercury,

the protector of commerce and industry. One of the names by which they are locally known is *Meurgers* or *Murgets*. It is difficult to resist the suggestion that in this provincial word the tenacity of popular memory has preserved the name of Mercury.

Under these various forms Druidic remains are thickly scattered over the northern and western districts of France. How and why were they brought to the spots where they now are fixed?

Périgord is rich in these remains, but, in that paradise of *gourmets*, life is too easy to foster the growth of legends, which thrive best in stonier soil. The peasantry are credulous enough respecting the stones themselves, but they do not occupy their minds with inquiries into their origin. It is not in a country whose patron saint might be Courtois, the famous artist who won by his *pâtés* the favour of the great Frederick and an European fame,—it is not in the country of partridges, of delicately flavoured *oranges*, of rich Bergerac, of celestial, perfumed truffles—the soul of Perigordian cookery—that we can expect grand imaginative legends. So far as I can discover, there is no distinct explanation of their origin current among the people.

Brittany, on the other hand, gives a characteristic explanation. Its superstitions have the grave, sad, and mystic tone which belongs to a province that has been the nursing-mother of thinkers preoccupied with religious questions. As fishermen

plying their perilous trade on a dangerous coast, as husbandmen wresting by main force a scanty subsistence from a niggard soil, the Breton peasant gives free play to the sombre imagination of the Celt. The mysteries of the unseen are very near to their daily life. They realise to themselves in dramatic form the spiritual world by which they are surrounded, and speak as if the conflict of heaven and hell for the possession of the land were waged before their very eyes. The stones that strew the land are due, in their belief, to diabolical agency. This explanation is not indeed universal. The *lits de St. Jean* and *St. Ronan* have been already mentioned; and in the canton of Bourbiac (Côtes-du-Nord) stands a vast menhir which, as popular tradition tells us, grew year by year like a plant till the crucifixion of our Lord, when its growth suddenly ceased. Sometimes also the stones seem to be endowed with the power of resistance to the Evil One. Thus at Cleder there is one which is scored with the devil's talons. He tried to raise it, that he might hurl it at the church which St. Pol was building at Léon, but it could not be moved. The grey, gigantic warders of a past civilisation that keep watch over the solitary plain of Carnac are, according to one Breton legend, a host of pagan warriors whom St. Cornely turned into stone. There is also the *Pierre de St. Phillibert*, between Quimperlé and Moëlan, which gives immediate relief to the colic, if the stomach is rubbed upon it. In one instance, at

least, the historical account has been preserved in the local name ; not far from Lézardrieux are three dolmens which are called *Men-ar-Rumpet*, or Stones of the Druids. But the theory of diabolic agency is the most popular and widespread throughout Brittany. Tradition tells us that the Archangel Michael condemned the conquered Satan to labour in raising Mont St. Michel, which was destined to be the stronghold of heaven against the power of hell. Desperate were the devil's efforts to execute his task. There are the *Épau-le-du-Diable* and the *Faix-du-Diable*, both of which show marks of his bones. Near Louvigné-du-Désert lies a stone which the devil strove with might and main to move. So fiercely did he struggle that, in the long nick which runs down the whole length of the *Pierre-du-Diable*, may be traced his thin, sharp-pointed spine. But these peculiar marks on stones are not always evil in their origin. Thus in the commune of Lournac (Corrèze) there is a stone marked with the footprint of God. It was once no uncommon sight to see the shepherds prostrated in simple adoration before *lou pécha del boun Diou*. But to resume the common Breton tradition. Passing by Antrain (Ille-et-Vilaine) with two enormous blocks, one under each arm, the devil dropped the *Pierre Longue*, which still lies on the spot where it fell ; the other fell on the Champ Dolent near Dol. At Hinglé, near Dinan, is a dolmen called *Pierre-de-Diabol* ; at Pléleuf and at Louvigné-du-Désert is the *Cadouer-an-Diol*,

or Devil's Chair, on which he may still be seen sitting in different shapes. Another stone in the Côtes-du-Nord, in which small basins and channels may be traced, is known as the *Sabol-an-Diol*, or Devil's Shoe. The theory of Satanic worship is probably the parent of a tradition and a practice common in the country. Sometimes the overthrow of these stones is attributed to the patron saint of the district, as if the powers of heaven and hell were here in conflict ; thus, in the neighbourhood of Guingamp is an *Allée couverte* which was overthrown by St. Jolivet. And it was the common, if not the universal, practice in Brittany to bury unbaptized infants in the neighbourhood of these Druidic remains. So, too, the peasant of Périgord, who sees at nightfall faint flickering lights playing round menhirs or dolmens, knows that these *feux-follets* are the spirits of those who have died without Christian baptism. Is it altogether absurd to hint that in this popular fancy and practice may be enshrined the remote historical fact that some of these stones were once the burial-places of heathens ?

South of the Loire different answers are given to the questions how and why the Druidic stones were reared in the spots where they now are found. In the replies of the peasantry of Touraine and Berri, or of Bas Poitou and La Vendée, something of the provincial character may be traced. In neither do we find the full stature of the grand and gloomy imagination of the Celt.



The legend of Bas Poitou and La Vendée resembles that of Brittany. Nor is this surprising, if it is remembered that, down to B.C. 27, Armorica included almost all the country between the Loire and the Garonne. But the legend is Breton with a difference. Bas Poitou is a country of lawyers, not of poets; its inhabitants are too sensible to dream, too wise to attempt to fly. The controversies of the law-courts, and the spirit of contradiction inherent in the legal mind, turned into satire whatever of poetry the country contained. It has no ballads, but its *noëls en langage poictevin*, of which Rabelais speaks, are tart satirical verses. Consequently there is a strong legal colouring, as well as a tinge of satire in the definite, and, as a theory, satisfactory answer which the peasant of the district gives to the question of the origin of the Druidic remains.

Off the coast near Sables d'Olonne are two islands, Noirmoutier and Île d'Yeu. The smaller island is famous for the Pont de St. Martin. St. Martin, the thaumaturgist of Gaul, desired to cross over on a missionary expedition from Notre-Dame-de-Monts to the island of Yeu; but he had no means of making the transit. So he determined to play a trick upon Satan. He made a curious mechanical fan of ice, the cooling effect of which was miraculous. As he expected, the ruler of hell was tempted by this fan. One day Satan met him, and asked, "Martin, wilt thou sell me thy fan? See, here is gold for the

purchase!" And even as he spoke, the grass, the leaves, the pebbles, nay, even the trunks of the trees themselves were turned into gold. "Thy gold perish with thee!" replied Martin; "yet this fan will I give thee on one condition—that thou makest me a bridge, so that I may pass over dry-shod to the Island of Oia." "I will make thee thy bridge," said the Evil One, "if the first soul that passes over it may belong to me." "Be it so!" said Martin; "only the bridge must be made this very night, and finished before cockcrow." "A bargain—a bargain!" cried Satan, hardly able to contain himself for joy at the prospect of holding the saint in his grip. Then, as evening fell, he summoned round him all the rank and file of his infernal troop—goblins, and imps, and gnomes, and dwarfs, and witches, and sorceresses, and wise women. "Good news!" said he, "Martin, that Apostle of Christ, our mortal foe, shall be ours this very night." At his words there burst from the troop a yell so fiendish that the men of Tours and Poitiers cowered in terror, and the sailors of a ship far out at sea, making her way to Marseilles, fell on their knees, and crossed themselves in fear. "He will be ours," continued Satan, "if, before the cock crows, you can throw a bridge from the mainland to the Island of Oia. To work, then, at once! I will go and make the village cock drunk, so that he may not crow so early." Then the devilish troop scoured the country far and near, bringing stones in their hands or on their backs,

and working with desperate energy. Huge rocks were poured into the sea ; the work was all but done ; and but half the night was gone. Already at low-tide St. Martin might have walked across in safety. There wanted but a few more stones. Suddenly, the village cock, excited and restless with his debauch, crowed a tipsy crow, full two hours before the dawn. Satan was taken in his own trap. The work stopped as though by magic. All round the country, for leagues and leagues, the devils were compelled to drop their stones ; and the mark of the saw they were using to cut in half one enormous block is visible to this day, while hundreds are scored by their talons. So St. Martin obtained his bridge.

The legend of Touraine and Berri is pretty and fanciful rather than imaginative ; it has neither the definiteness nor the satiric touch of the explanation of Poitou. The stones were dropped by fairies, who were condemned, in punishment for some unknown crimes, to carry them from point to point between nightfall and cockcrow. If the dawn broke before the task was completed, the stones fell from the hands of the fairies and were imbedded in the soil. Therefore the punishment has never been completed, and every evening, at nightfall, the fairies return, and, with low sobs and moans, wander disconsolately round the spot until daybreak. Near the Mer Rouge, in the swampy district of La Brenne, is the *Pierre à la Fade*. The stone was to be carried by a fairy, in punishment for some crime,

to serve for the foundations of the Castle of Bouchet. The cock crew before she reached her destination ; the stone fell, and could never again be moved. If the traveller passes the pool at night, he will see a feeble flickering light wander before him over the water. It is the fairy, who has never been able to complete her penance, and therefore always haunts the spot. The only trace of gloomy grandeur about the stone traditions of Berri and Touraine is connected with the *Pierre à Nom*, near Arminié. No one knows, nor ever can know, its name ; for whoever knows it dies immediately.

Almost universally the stones are popularly supposed to be the guardians of treasures. Near Fougères, for instance (Ille-et-Vilaine), is the *Pierre du Trésor*. It is to this superstition that many stones owed their destruction. Those who dig for treasures find themselves drawn by unseen hands, slowly but irresistibly, downwards. The adventurers must drop their spades and flee. The stone that bars the entrance is watched with jealous care by the fairies, or the *fradets*. But once a year, on Palm Sunday, the power ceases. When the priest in the procession reaches the door of the church, and the "Atollite Portas" ("Lift up your heads, O ye gates!") is sung, the stone rises from its place, and leaves an entrance. Then the man who has courage may enter, and find himself in the presence of vast treasures. But it is only for a brief space that the stone remains raised. When the words of the sacred hymn are

ended, it falls back in its place, and no power on earth can raise it again. Many are the victims of greed who have for ever vanished from the light of day. The *Pé Rocher*, near Bernard, was the scene of a terrible disaster. Two of the *fradets*, under the form of black dogs, guard the treasure that is hidden there. Once a year, on the Feast of Palms, at the grand celebration of the mass, the way is opened to the vault. One Palm Sunday a mother and her child were sitting by the *Pé Rocher* when the way was opened. The child entered, and came out again with her pinafore filled with gold. Her mother forced her to return. She passed the black dogs in safety, for the bell still rang ; but the moment it ceased, the aperture closed over the belated treasure-seeker. The screams of the mother attracted the people ; the priest himself came with cross and holy water ; but the opening remained closed, and the victim never again saw the light of day.

Another legend of similar character ends more happily. A poor widow woman was herding her sheep, and knitting in the moat of the Castle of Boussac, and her only child sat in her lap. It was Palm Sunday, and, as the priest approached the door of the church, a stone flew out of the castle wall, and disclosed a passage. With the child in her arms the woman entered, and saw a heap of gold. Putting the child down, she filled her arms with all that she could carry, staggered with it to the door, hurried out, threw the money on

the turf, and rushed back to fetch the child. But the stone had sprung back to its place, and no trace of it appeared. She prayed to the Virgin and to the Saints, but her prayers seemed of no avail. That night, exhausted by weeping, she fell asleep, and in her sleep she saw a vision. A fairy of surpassing beauty appeared to her, and told her not to weep; on the same day a year hence, and at the same hour, the door would open again. "If then," said the fairy, "thou renderest back all the money that thou hast taken, thou wilt receive again thy child. Only, every Saturday night, thou must place at the foot of the wall a child's shift, clean from the wash; and every Sunday morning thou wilt find the child's dirty one. By this token thou shalt know that she still lives." This the mother did, and at the close of the year she restored the gold, and received back her child.

It would be impossible to chronicle half the superstitions which cluster round Druidic remains. Here, for instance, is the *Pierre dégouttante*, or Dropping Stone, which is the subject of superstitious worship, because, when the liquid drops cease to flow, then the Day of Judgment is at hand. Here is a stone which, on a certain night of the year, dances in strange fantastic fashion; but woe to the man who sees it, for he is pursued and crushed. Here is another, which, in wet weather, glows with a deep red colour, popularly supposed to be the indelible stain of the blood

of victims. Here is the *Pierre percée*, through the hole in which, according to local traditions, sacrificial victims placed their heads, and were then decapitated with the Sacred Knife. A nosegay passed through this hole is an irrevocable pledge of fidelity between lovers; blades of grass plucked at its base, moss scraped from its surface, protect those who carry them against the evil spirits that roam through the country. Nearly all the stones possess some miraculous gifts of healing. To others belong other attributes. Thus a slide down the *Faix du Diable*, or the *Roche écriante* (Ille-et-Vilaine), brings good fortune to girls in obtaining husbands. Near Neuilly (Aisne) there is a stone with two channels cut in its surface, from which the bride and bridegroom drink in the presence of their friends, and are ever afterwards happy in their married life. At Bucy, in the same department, the bride slides down a stone on her sabots. It became a proverbial expression for a woman who has by her misconduct forfeited her prospect of honourable marriage—*Elle a cassé son sabot*.

But it is not only round the stones which stud the north and west of France that superstitions linger. Imagination takes a thousand forms. The treasury of Breton legends has already been explored, and in other provinces it is vain to expect traditions of the same sombre imaginative splendour. Beyond the confines of Brittany is found no such impressive portent of war as the

spectacle of Arthur's host—grim warriors who, mounted on grey horses with wide-opened, snorting nostrils, scour the mountain sides. Yet Brittany is not the only province in which the supernatural swayed the popular imagination. Elsewhere in France, if legends are less imposing and less deeply tinged with religious colouring, they are more characteristic of the French nation. The “*esprit grivois, malicieux, spirituel*,”—the gay raillery, with its bright fancy and subacid flavour of sly malice, is best represented in other districts. The country between the Loire and the Garonne is still peopled with strange phantom forms; the barren districts of *la campagne Berrichonne*, where children shepherd wild-looking sheep on heaths that know no other signs of life, the marshy wastes and glittering ponds of *La Sologne*, the storm-swept *dunes* of *La Vendée*—all are rich in legendary lore.

Even in Normandy the shrewd peasant shudders as Gallery and his hounds sweep by him on the wind. Like the “*Grand Veneur*” in the forest of Fontainebleau, this phantom huntsman and his spectral pack are often seen by belated rustics. In Périgord it is called *la chasse-volante*; the leader of the ghostly troop, which rushes through the sky with the neigh of horses, the clack of whips, the bay of hounds, and the cries of the huntsmen, is a tall woman clad in white from head to foot, and mounted on a white horse. Its appearance portends terrible calamities, and, as



such, it preceded the French Revolution. In other districts of the same province it is called the *Chasse du roi Hérode*. Because of the Massacre of the Innocents the king and his court were condemned thus to travel for ever through the air. The Poitevin obtains charms against the *Chasse-Galerie* or *Chasse-briquet*, or, as it is sometimes called, the *Chasse St. Hubert*. The legend, as told in La Vendée and Poitou, runs as follows : Gallery was a great noble, who had neither the fear of God before his eyes nor any bowels of compassion for the peasant. Every week he openly profaned the Holy Day of the Lord. It chanced at length that one Sunday, during the very hour of the celebration of the mass, he put up a stag with his hounds, and followed after it in hot pursuit till the stag took refuge in the cave of a hermit. The holy man was busied with his devotions ; but when Gallery came up, he refused to surrender the dumb guest which had sought the shelter of his cell. As Gallery persisted, the hermit threatened him with the vengeance of Heaven, if he did not, that solemn day and hour, bow his knee in worship to God. But the cruel noble scoffed at the warning, and made as though he would seize the prey by force. Then the hermit pronounced upon him the Divine sentence. "Go," he cried, "sinful man ! pursue thy chase as thou wilt ; the Almighty has condemned thee to hunt for ever from sunset to sunrise." And from that time to this the spectral

stag, chased by the hounds and followed by the pricker cheering on his phantom pack, sweeps through the sky.

Poitou and La Vendée are the haunts of *loups-garous* and *garaches*, human beings who are compelled to assume the shape of wolves, and love to devour the raw flesh of children. In Périgord the sons of priests are obliged at certain hours of the night to become animals. The *léberous*, as they are called, are seen to leap in human shape from the windows of their houses, and rush to the nearest stream. They plunge into it, cross to the farther side, don the skin which the devil has placed on the bank, and scour the country till daybreak. Somewhat similar to the *loups-garous* and *léberous* are the *bidoches*; but they are harmless, and generally take the shape of goats. Nothing can break the spell that lies upon them, unless their blood be made to flow. Against ordinary lead or steel they are proof. But when the gun is loaded with three pieces of consecrated bread collected at the three Christmas celebrations, the enchantment may be broken. It was so in the case of a girl named Dormez, the daughter of wealthy parents near Niort, who assumed the form of a goat. She was struck by a charge of consecrated bread; blood flowed, and she recovered her human shape. But the villagers, dazzled by the richness of her jewels, killed her, and buried the body in a hastily dug grave among the *dunes*. Her parents, distracted at her loss,

were guided by her favourite dog to the spot where she was buried, and the crime was discovered. The place is still called *la fosse à Dormez*.

It is unlucky to kill a *bidoche*, and another of these *dunes* commemorates the fate of one and the disastrous consequences that followed. It is called *la casse à la Reine*, for it was the Queen of the North who nightly crossed the seas to play upon the sand in the shape of a goat, and at that spot was killed. A peasant charged his musket, not with the consecrated bread, but with a bullet blessed by the priest. His aim was true; the spell was broken. She stood before him a queen, clad in gorgeous raiment, glittering with gold and gems. But the bullet had struck her to the heart. "Ah! luckless man!" she faintly said, "had I been wounded only, I would have given thee wealth, and honour, and all that thy heart could desire; thou and thy family should have been rich, noble, fortunate. But my heart is pierced, and thine is not touched. Therefore thy name shall be a byword for misfortune from generation to generation." So saying, she died. The curse was fulfilled to the very letter. The man himself lived barely a year; his house was burned; his cattle sickened; his crops were blighted. All that his family put their hands to failed. Good luck deserted them; they went from bad to worse, and now are sunk into the lowest scale of fortune.

Another monster which haunts the district is the *Miaque*, which leaps on the backs of

horses, and rides them furiously all the night through, till they are worn to skin and bone. The animals are found in the morning, their manes twisted and knotted, splashed from head to foot, and in a lather of foam. Pieces of clover are placed on the Druidic stones which abound in this part of the country to preserve the peasant from the *cheval-malet*. This is a white horse, saddled and bridled, which invites weary, footsore travellers to mount. It even bends its knees if the peasant is aged, in order that he may the more easily reach the saddle. But woe to the man who mounts! The animal bounds away at headlong speed, dashing through forests and over rocks, and generally ends by throwing its rider over a precipice. Sometimes the *cheval-malet* has neither head nor tail. Upon it arrives the *Guilla-neu* or New Year.

On dark and stormy nights giants prowl through the land, and the name of the ogre Gargantua is everywhere. Nearly every Druidic stone is connected with some legend. In Touraine, for instance, near the Château La Vallière, stands the Menhir du Vaujour, at a point where two valleys meet. Every night three ladies, riding on white horses, leave the wooded hills from which the valleys spring, pass down the Vallée des Dames, and celebrate strange religious ceremonies at the Menhir, then ascend the Vallée du Vaujour, where they hold their nightly revels, and at cockcrow disappear. *La Birette*, a phantom figure shrouded

in white, traverses Berri, bringing misfortunes to all that encounter it. Round the *Fosse des Diables*, in the Forest of Chanteloube, are heard mysterious sounds, and spectral figures flit to and fro through the deep shadows of the trees; he who loses his way in the forest, and draws near to the *Fosse*, never returns again, alive or dead, to this world of mortals. As has been said, the *Martes*, tall, hideous, black-haired women, call to the shepherds from the tops of the dolmens which serve as their couches, and invite them to their embrace. By the side of the streams the *laveuses de nuit* ply their ghostly trade, while round the Druidic remains which stud these provinces gleam strange fires, and unearthly figures celebrate wild festivals.

At Christmas the Poitevin lights his Yule log, which burns for the whole octave, and is called the *Cosse de Neu*. At the same season every animal has an extra morsel of good pasture, called *guillaneu*. On the Eve of St. John fires blaze out in innumerable parishes throughout France south of the Loire. In Poitou the material of the fire is called *le fougneau de St. Jean*. Each of the peasants is provided with a hazel bough, from which hangs a bunch of St. John's wort; its charred embers are a sovereign remedy against toothache. The hazel bough itself is a preservative from all kinds of maladies. As the fire dies down, stones are thrown into its embers; whoever throws the largest stone is fortunate in the coming year. Walnut twigs burned in the fire are

passed over the backs of the cattle to protect them from disease. The *crêpe poitevine* is a sort of pancake which is tossed in the pan three times a year: at New Year's Day, to have money throughout the next twelve months; at Candlemas, to make the dough rise in the oven; at Shrove-tide, to preserve the corn from the blight.

The two islands off Sables-d'Olonne, Noirmoutier and Île d'Yeu, have their distinctive superstitions. Noirmoutier is haunted by *Braillards*, who, on dark stormy nights, utter piercing cries of distress, and so induce the fishermen to believe that there are shipwrecked mariners to be saved. When they have lured their would-be saviours to the verge of some dangerous rock, they rise from the water and disappear with a mocking laugh into the mist and spray.

All along the sandy shores of the Bay of Biscay legends abound. In La Vendée, near the sea, stood a great city, called Beslebet. It was rich beyond description, full of all that was sumptuous and splendid. The poorest were clothed in silks and soft velvets, and fed from silver dishes; the food was of the daintiest, the wine was of the rarest. But the city was enchanted; and the peasants looked askance upon its inhabitants, and crossed themselves when its walls rose in sight. One May the winter had lasted far on into the early spring; storms raged continuously, and had as yet abated none of their violence, and the fishermen were starving. Desperate from cold and hunger, Pierre

Lebœuf knocked at the gate of the enchanted city, and craved admittance. The warders received him with open arms. He was clothed in gorgeous apparel, and conducted through glittering galleries to a stately hall, where a rich banquet was preparing. Yet the fisherman was uneasy in his mind, doubting what might be the purport of this splendid hospitality. His guides had left him in order to give notice of his coming, that his meal might be made ready, and he was alone. He peered carefully into all the corners of the hall, sounded the floor with his foot, tried the panels with his fist. At last, in a dark niche of the building, covered by a heavy curtain, he found a high narrow door. Half opening it, he saw himself on the edge of a vast pit, filled with the arms and legs and heads of hundreds of human beings who had been foully murdered. Close to him lay the head of his own brother, whom he and his widowed mother believed to have been drowned off Noirmoutier. The eyes glared with an expression of wild horror, and the features were distorted with pain. Then he saw that he was in a great strait. But he called to his aid a stout heart and a ready wit, and boldly asked his hosts if he might leave them for an hour in order to draw his nets higher up upon the shore, for the wind had turned, and they were all that he possessed in the world. He would save them, and return at once, bringing his mother with him. They suffered him to depart, strictly charging him to return with all speed. Pierre passed the gates,

and rushed forth to raise the alarm. The whole countryside came together; they stormed the enchanted city, destroyed a full half of the inhabitants, and the priests pronounced a solemn curse upon its cruel walls. Yet, man's vengeance was not severe enough to expiate crimes that had wearied Heaven itself. The sea rose in its wrathful fury, and buried Beslebet beneath a rain of sand. On still evenings can be heard, even to this day, the cries of the imprisoned people, and the choked peals from the belfries as the slow-pacing hours revolve.

Another of these buried cities is at Lourdes. Many years ago the old city, which was of vast size, and densely populated, stood on the borders of the lake. But the inhabitants were wicked, and God determined to punish their crimes. The lake rose, and flooded the town, and even now on St. John's Eve can be heard the bells of the buried city. A similar legend is current in Languedoc. In the commune of St. Pau, not far from Toulouse, is a lake which popular superstition believes to have swallowed a church and its worshippers. A cluster of enormous stones, called the Nine Stones (*Las Naou Peyres*), together with one solitary one (*La Peyre Soule*), are said to be a cemetery and a cross—all that now remains visible of a church and a village. The story runs as follows: It was Sunday, and the mass was being celebrated before a crowded congregation, when a pack of hounds gave tongue outside. The



officiating priest, who was a keen sportsman, forgetting in the excitement of the moment the place where he stood, and the sacred office which he was performing, cried out, "If Bellaoude" (his favourite dog) "is there, I will wager that it is all over with the hare." In punishment for his blasphemy, the waters rose and swallowed the church, the celebrant, and the worshippers.

The tone of this last legend is widely different from that of Breton superstitions. There is about it the touch of sly malice, the covert gibe at the Church, which characterise this group of provincial stories. Another and a stronger illustration of the *esprit gaulois* is afforded by one of the many legends that have gathered round the quaint mouldering figures which adorn the churches. Every visitor to Amiens will remember the figure and the legend of St. Firmin; less known, though similar, is the story associated with the remote church of Angles, a little town on the left bank of the Troussepoil, about twenty miles from Roche-sur-Yon. Upon the gable of the church stands the figure of a beast like a bear, out of which issues a cross. The story is that the valley of Troussepoil was the haunt of a huge animal, with long hair, which ravaged the country for leagues round, devouring the women, children, and cattle. Every morning and evening he bathed in the river, and the name which it bears at the present day is derived from the smoothness of the beast's coat when he emerged from the water.

The whole country groaned under the infliction, and implored the aid of the Church. The Papal Legate came with pomp and ceremony, and exorcised the beast ; but his words were powerless, for he had early that morning, as day broke, kissed a comely milkmaid. The Abbot of Fontaines was not more successful ; for, though a kind man and charitable, he had drunk four bottles of wine after midnight. The Abbot of Talmond had no better fortune ; in his zeal to rid the land of the foul pest he broke the head of a peasant who got in his way. But a holy man, named Martin, was at that time Abbot of Angles. He determined to make the attempt to save the country from this monster. Five days and nights he fasted and prayed ; on the sixth day he sought the lair of the beast. At the first sign of the cross it yielded, and followed him as gently as a lamb back to Angles, while the people shouted their alleluias of triumph. But the girls laughed at him, asking, “Father Martin ! how long hast thou been the devil’s shepherd ?” The holy man, making no reply, caused the beast to rise up to the gable end of the church, and with a second sign of the cross turned it into stone ; and there it is to this day. Then turning to the girls who had laughed, he said, “Hitherto men have spoken of the angelic beauty of the maidens of Angles ; henceforth ye shall be ugly.” And straightway it was as he said ; and the maidens of Angles are noted for their plainness to the present time.

The beast of the Troussepoil may have been similar in size and shape to the mysterious *grande bête* which still haunts Berri. It is an animal with great fiery eyes, wide branching horns, as large as an ox, and covered with long red hair. It pursues benighted peasants to their homes, but it does them no harm. If they run, it runs; it stops when they stop, turns when they turn, and always keeps close behind them, with its hot breath passing over their necks.

Fairies abound in all three districts. In Poitou they are often kindly; they dress the horses or feed the sheep, and the animals that are tended by the fairies are always fat. In Berri, as has been previously shown, they played an important part. It was the fairies who brought the gigantic dolmens, and the stones are dropped promiscuously here and there, because the fairies were surprised on their way between given points by the crow of the cock. A ford over the river Arnon is similarly the work of a fairy. She intended to dam up the bed of the stream entirely, that so she might walk over dryshod. For this end she gathered together a vast heap of earth and stones, which she carried in her pinafore. Coming near to the river, she threw in a part, which forms the present ford. Before she could cast in the rest, a rival fairy changed herself into a mosquito, and stung her on the nose. She dropped the mud upon the bank, and now the place of the ford is marked by a little hill at the side of the stream.

Folk-lore has perhaps a scientific value for students of ethnology, and may supply connecting links between distant peoples. In France, the character of the provincial legends reflects the character of the different provinces. But this faggot has no scientific value. In this material, cultured century, we have ceased to believe the legends that may still find some credence in rural France. With us "tales of the *loup-garou* in the forest" have passed into a proverbial expression for the extreme of improbability. Yet these were "the pleasant old stories and tales of former times" which the good Grandgousier told to his wife and her women, as he sat "warming himself over a good, clear, great fire, and, waiting upon the broiling of some chestnuts, was very serious in drawing scratches upon the hearth with a stick burnt at one end, wherewith they did use to stir the fire." These again were the stories which Iseult of Brittany told her children to beguile the weariness of her joyless, blighted life, and which

She gleaned from Breton granddames, when a child,  
In every hut along this sea-coast wild ;  
She herself loves them still, and, when they are told,  
Can forget all to hear them, as of old.

We no longer narrate these stories in the domestic circle with the unquestioning faith of the easy-going days of Grandgousier. We do not even, like Iseult, recount them to our children, lest, perhaps, they should laugh at our credulity. Some of us listen to popular legends with thinly

veiled contempt; others hasten to prove that Gargantua, like Hercules, is the sun drying up the rivers and devouring the crops; others may, I hope, hear them with wistful regret for the faith, the poetry, and the romance that they enshrine, and for the moment, in the soft twilight of fancy, suspend those critical faculties which destroy poetic faith.

## RABELAIS

THE tide of the popularity of François Rabelais has alternately ebbed and flowed. His immediate fame is attested by the sixty editions through which "Pantagruel" passed in the sixteenth century. Montaigne places Rabelais in the same rank as Boccaccio, second to Ovid and Ariosto; he was the "bon père" of Brantôme; the Cardinal du Perron called "Pantagruel" "*le livre par excellence*." But barely fifty years had elapsed before a reaction commenced, which culminated in the reigns of Louis XIV and Louis XV. Though La Fontaine and Molière did not scruple to draw largely from his overflowing treasury, and though Madame de Sévigné was ready *mourir à rire* at his rich humour, his gigantic offences against decorum blinded the world to the daring originality of his fantastic genius. The age of the "Grand Monarque" was opposed to the sixteenth century. Its spirit was out of sympathy with Rabelais' iconoclastic ideas; its taste was outraged by his plain-spoken style, its refined licence scandalised by the open coarseness of his manners. It ceased to multiply editions of "Pantagruel," and passed from the notes and commentaries of Huet,

Passerat, and *Ménage* to the abridgements and expurgations of the Abbés Pérau and de Marsy. The general tone of feeling is expressed in Voltaire's remark that Rabelais was "un philosophe ivre qui n'a écrit que dans le temps de son ivresse." A few years later and the tide had once more turned in favour of Rabelais. His earnestness, wisdom, and philosophy were still depreciated; but his claims to rank among great humorists were generally acknowledged. Again Voltaire expressed the altered taste of the day when, in 1760, he wrote to Madame du Deffand: "Rabelais, quand il est bon, est le premier des bons bouffons." For the last century the stream has flowed steadily in the same direction. The reputation of Rabelais, not only as a humorist, but as a deep thinker, a zealous reformer, a profound satirist, was carried forward on the tide of the French Revolution to a height from which, to say the least, it has never receded. His place is secured among the master-minds of the world.

Few writers have been more pillaged or more imitated. Besides La Fontaine and Molière, Racine, Boileau, Beaumarchais, and Piron are indebted to him for the foundations of some of their most famous passages: even Voltaire, in "*Le Pauvre Diable*," did not hesitate to copy, almost sentence by sentence, Rabelais' attack upon the monks. Crowds of writers, famous and obscure, paid his genius the sincere flattery of imitation. "*Les Aventures du Baron de Fæneste*"

and "La Confession Catholique du Sieur de Sancy," by Agrippa d'Aubigné; the "Voyage dans la Lune" of Cyrano de Bergerac; the "Gil Blas" of Le Sage; the "Contes Drolatiques" of Honoré de Balzac, are among the most illustrious scions of "Pantagruel." Foreign men of letters were equally appreciative of his genius. Without Rabelais Spain would have lost the *obra jocosa* of Quevedo, and England would have been the poorer by the loss of "Gulliver's Travels" and "Tristram Shandy." He has received more consistent honour from England than from his own fellow-countrymen. Shakespeare possibly alludes to him in "As you like it,"<sup>1</sup> and three books of "Pantagruel" were translated in the seventeenth century. Southey, one of the purest of English writers, refers to him repeatedly; Hallam, the most impartial of critics, blames the French for their unjust depreciation of his intellectual powers; Scott's healthy temperament found much to admire in his genial humour; Coleridge regarded him as the deepest and boldest thinker of his age, and classed him with Shakespeare, Dante, and Cervantes among the great creative minds of the world. But if his audience in this country has been fit, it has also been few. Many who write allusively of Rabelais as the French Aristophanes, the modern Lucian, the Democritus of his age,

<sup>1</sup> See act iii. sc. 2: "You must borrow me Gargantua's mouth first." The allusion to Rabelais is not certain, because Gargantua was a popular hero before the publication of "Pantagruel."



the impersonation of the *esprit gaulois*—many of those who speak of the curé of Meudon in familiar terms of intimate acquaintance,—presume, on the authority of a plausible line in Pope, that he was a mere merry-andrew. It is rare to find any one who has even attempted to read the immortal romance which makes Rabelais as truly the representative of the French Renaissance as Voltaire was the intellectual embodiment of the critical movement of eighteenth-century France. Few would be the guests if the host, like the Cardinal du Perron, admitted none to his table but students of “Pantagruel.” Deserted would be the road to preferment if the passport to an abbey or a cardinal’s hat was, as in the case of Louis Barbier, a knowledge of Rabelais.

The age, the man, and the book are profoundly interesting. Why, then, is “Pantagruel” so little read? Much of the humour has lost its savour with the disappearance of the social conditions on which it turned. On the twentieth century a wealth of local and personal allusion is wasted. We know little of the romances of false chivalry which Rabelais parodies; we are wearied by the gigantic buffoonery; we are sated with a vinous hilarity which harps mechanically on a single string; our literary taste is offended by the wearisome redundancy with which he exhausts his various topics. But the chief reason still remains. To all but students of literature “Pantagruel” must neces-

sarily remain a sealed book because of its terrific indecency. No writer, ancient or modern, can rival Rabelais for the volume of the torrent which he pours forth of undisguised, unadulterated, and elaborate filth. Three excuses are pleaded for his obscenity—the manners of the age, the distinction between coarse and seductive pictures, and the necessity of the times. The three apologies are true, but they do not wholly excuse Rabelais. His indecency is characteristic of an age of unblushing licentiousness, and belongs to a period when language went stark naked. As Dutch writers spoke of Petronius Arbiter as “*vir sanctissimus*,” so the ladies and gentlemen of the Court of Francis I found Rabelais “*delectable*.” Nor is Rabelais an immoral writer. He never panders to impure passions, uses no colours to lure to destruction, takes no sickly delight in tickling the fancy with dreams of unhallowed enjoyment. His freedom of speech is absolutely unbridled; but, though he says whatever comes uppermost, he strips licentiousness of its gay disguises and exhibits vice in all its naked deformity. As a priest nature had for him no mysteries, as an anatomist no sanctities. Yet for all this no one can rise from the perusal of “*Pantagruel*” as a whole with any feeling of disgust for the author. Coleridge’s remark may seem exaggerated, but it is not far from the fact. “I could write a treatise in praise of the moral elevation of Rabelais’ work which would make the Church stare and the

Conventicle groan, and yet would be truth and nothing but truth."

The third excuse for Rabelais is that, as a satirist, he was obliged to work by hints and in masquerade. Like Aristophanes, he disguises his face in the wine-lees. Like Montesquieu, again, in the "*Lettres Persanes*," he distracts attention from his attacks upon society by his pictures of the nude. Voltaire, to whom the experience of the "*Lettres Philosophiques*" taught the same secret, represents Rabelais explaining to Lucian and Erasmus in the Elysian Fields the method which he followed. "*Voyant que la sagesse et la science ne menaient qu'à l'hôpital ou au gibet . . . je m'avisai être plus fou que tous mes compatriotes ensemble. Je pris mes compatriotes par leur faible ; je parlai de boire, je dis des ordures, et avec ce secret tout me fut permis.*" Rabelais makes the same excuse for himself. When Panurge cursed the Pope-hawk in the Ringing Island, Ædituus warns him to speak low. Panurge changes his note with "*Let us drink,*" and the sacristan replies, "*Vous parlez bien à cette heure ; tant que vous parlez ainsi, vous ne serez jamais hérétique.*" *L'homme qui rit n'est pas dangereux.* Rabelais' buffoonery enabled his protectors to save him from the Sorbonne. He assumed the mask to elude the search of heresy-hunters, and donned the cap and bells to escape the *san benito*. The truth of the apology is confirmed by the fact that his most serious words

are immediately followed by his wildest freaks of buffoonery. But though numerous passages might be quoted from his works of grave and solemn beauty, of earnest kindly wisdom, and unaffected elevation of moral feeling, it seems impossible to deny that he chose the particular disguise of roystering animalism because it was most congenial to his jovial temperament; and, after all is said, the intense geniality, the natural heartiness, the fresh joviality of the *gros rire tourangeau* are the most sincere pleas that can be urged in mitigation of the penalties he justly incurs by his offences against taste and decorum. Rabelais has at least met with retributive justice. His obscenities protected him from immediate persecution; they have also robbed him of posthumous rewards. They reprieved him from the stake, but consigned him to a literary *oubliette*.

Nothing can be done with so incorrigible an author. He must be taken as he is, or not at all. In the original French he is unintelligible to all who have not made a special study of the provincialisms and dialects of the ancient Gallic tongue. He cannot be Bowdlerised, for expurgation would be extinction. English readers can study him, if they will, in a translation which is a masterpiece of vigour, rivalling the original in its command of the linguistic resources of obscenity. Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty set to work upon his version with patriotic zeal. He determined to show the world that a true Briton could not be

outdone in his native treasures of obscene language by the most erudite of Frenchmen. It is enough to say that he succeeded.<sup>1</sup> A family author Rabelais can never be; but the originality of his genius, the serious purpose, the humour, the insight into human nature, the moral elevation which characterise many passages of "Pantagruel," together with the historical and etymological value of the work, justify some attempt to present a true sketch of the life and writings of a man who, as the great vernacular satirist of a stormy and excited period, created a new province in the modern world of letters, moulded the form of the language of his country, and profoundly influenced the destinies of the French Reformation.

In the altered conditions of modern society, and in the wide extension of knowledge, no author of

<sup>1</sup> Sir T. Urquhart stood in need throughout his life of all the Pantagruelian philosophy. He was born in 1611. He travelled in his youth through sixteen different kingdoms, and returned with a knowledge of foreign tongues, which probably procured him his place in the Court of Charles I. He was knighted in 1641. Ruin fell upon his ancient and honourable house, which, in his "Promptuary of Time," he traces in unbroken ascent to the red earth from which Adam was created. Faithful to his master's cause, he joined the rising of Mackenzie of Pluscardine, and was proscribed as a rebel by the Estates of Parliament. At the battle of Worcester he was taken prisoner, and eventually retired to the Low Countries. Tradition declares that he died in a fit of laughter on hearing the news of the restoration of Charles II. He only completed three books of "Pantagruel." The last two books of Rabelais were translated by Peter Motteux, a Huguenot refugee, who died under discreditable circumstances in St. Clement Danes in 1718.

the present day can hope to exercise the widespread influence of such universal individualities as Rabelais or Shakespeare. Both are universal, but with a broad difference. Shakespeare's works can be spoken of without reference to the man or his age. There is in them hardly a touch of personal idiosyncrasy; they possess within themselves principles of life which have preserved them incorruptible, because they are uncircumscribed by circumstances, unconditioned by time or place, unalloyed by prejudices or predilections. It is not so with the great French humorist. It is impossible to separate "Pantagruel" from the period when it was written, or from the personality of its author. Rabelais himself is a mystery. The ardent student wears the guise of the roystering Bohemian; the encyclopædic master of all the sciences is also the indefatigable jester and extravagant buffoon. His friends paint him as the determined foe of ignorance, the profoundest of thinkers, the universal man of letters who, like Pico della Mirandola, could maintain a thesis *de omni re scibili*; his enemies describe him as a profligate libertine, a rubicund leering Silenus, a drunken hiccuping monk, who mumbled his mass but mouthed his drinking song, and shortened his vespers that he might lengthen his carouse. His strange and original genius increased the mystery by indulgence in the wildest freaks. He delights to drop from the heights of wisdom to the depths of folly, to breathe the rare atmosphere of wind-

swept summits of thought or to wallow up to the neck in the mire of his obscenities. "Pantagruel" is no less an enigma than its author. Viewed from one side, it is an allegory enriched with broad humour, piquant satire, sparkling witticisms, dramatic representations of character, containing an inexhaustible store of information on the habits, manners, and customs of the day, exhibiting the most exalted ideal of morality that was conceived by any writer of the epoch. Regarded from a different standpoint, it is the most outrageously improbable of mediæval romances, a gigantic burlesque, a frolic of absurdity, an outpouring of vinous drivel, a huge and reeking dunghap.

These two conceptions of the *Homère bouffon* and his work are aptly represented in the two extant portraits of Rabelais which assert the strongest claims to be considered genuine. The first, coloured by popular fancy or blackened by the spleen of outraged opponents, represents him as the sensual Franciscan who died with a profane pun upon his lips. The second is drawn by the hand of an admirer, who detects a lofty purpose beneath the Titanic outbursts of ribald laughter, and sees in his terrific indecency a mask which the necessities of the times compel him to assume. Neither of the two portraits appears to be contemporary, or to date from a period anterior to 1620. The first, which is on wood, in the museum at Versailles, was engraved by Isaac Sarrahat in the beginning

of the eighteenth century. It gives the full-face of a man, turning slightly towards the left and looking towards the right, wearing a priest's cap with a small medallion in front, and dressed in a black gown trimmed with fur. The broad strong nose and wide-open nostrils, the large eyes surmounted by heavy eyebrows, the thick sensual lips, the mocking smile, give the ordinarily accepted portrait of the *Écorcheur des Veaux*. The other picture is to be found in the Faculty of Medicine at Montpellier, where several specimens of his handwriting are carefully preserved. It represents him with a grave, dignified, reflective countenance, a smooth, broad, unwrinkled forehead, large hazel eyes full of fire, a florid complexion, mobile lips, large nose, and chestnut beard and moustache. He wears the red gown of a doctor of medicine, with a square red-tufted cap. Upon the picture is inscribed the year 1537, the date at which Rabelais took his doctor's degree; but it appears that the portraits in the gallery of the Faculty, which extend from H. de Guintonia in 1239, were painted by the order of Chancellor Ranchin in 1610-20. The question, therefore, arises, to which no satisfactory answer can be given, whether this particular portrait is copied from a contemporary picture or is merely an imaginary representation, like the bulk of its companions. One thing seems to be certain. The Versailles portrait is not a true likeness of Rabelais. "Le portrait qu'on voit de Rabelais,"



says Tallemant des Réaux, "n'est pas fait sur luy; on l'a fait à plaisir à peu près comme on croyait qu'il étoit." If both portraits are imaginary, which gives the truer impression of the man? In the one he is the buffoon, the tippler, the Silenus; in the other the thinker, the scholar, the man of science. Which was Rabelais? It is the purpose of the following pages to offer an answer to the question.

The age of Rabelais, the man himself, and his writings are, as has been said, deeply interesting, and it is under these three heads that the subject will be treated.

Born in 1483, Rabelais died in 1553. His life thus extends over a period which witnessed the spread of the Renaissance, the growth of the Protestant Reformation, the commencement of the Catholic reaction. The winter of the senile Middle Ages had broken up before the warm spring of the Renaissance. New hemispheres were added to the worlds of thought and action. Navigators, scholars, thinkers were inspired by a spirit of enterprise and adventure which swept over Europe with the resistless flow of the returning tide that succeeds the inactive ebb. Every feature of Rabelais' work betokens a transition period. The taste, the manner, the form are mediæval; the criticism, the hatred of ignorance, the contempt for superstition, the thirst for study, the classic culture, the independence are modern. Rabelais represents the

thoughts, the exultation, and, at rare intervals, the regrets of the epoch. Analysis, method, freedom of thought were sapping the foundations of the social, the scientific, the philosophical, and the religious systems, and all the steps in the coming change are represented in "Pantagruel." Anatomist, physician, botanist, astronomer, proficient in architecture, skilled in navigation, versed in law, deeply read in philosophy, learned in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic, and possessing a smattering of many spoken languages, Rabelais brings to bear upon his vast subject that universality of knowledge which characterises the epoch. Though the field of learning was rapidly widening, it was still limited; he was not compelled to specialise his labours, but took the whole for his province. He has the roving humour of Burton, who among English writers most closely resembles him; he was not the slave of any one science, but roamed abroad, having an oar in every man's boat, tasting of every dish, sipping of every cup.

Rabelais is a humanist neither of the Italian nor of the Northern school. His monastic and medical training and the natural bent of his genius stunted the imaginative, artistic, poetic side of his nature, turned him towards a critical study of humanity, encouraged his inclination towards scientific investigation. He was a stranger to that love of the picturesque which inspired Italian poets and artists. Archæologist though he is, he feels none of the enthusiasm for antiquity which

thrilled Petrarch as he sat among the Baths of Diocletian. The mystic passion for woman which glowed in Dante and flamed up once more in the sonnets of Michael Angelo was extinguished in his breast. His sentiments are those of a mediæval monk. "Woman," says Pantagruel, "comes between man and the love of God." Whether Gargamelle died of joy at the death of Picrochole is all one to Rabelais: "I care not for her, or any other woman." He has no feeling for beauty and no artistic insight. The everlasting clang of the bells of the Eternal City impressed him more vividly than all the poetry of her ruins. Nor was his attitude towards the Renaissance that of the humanists of Germany or of Holland. Unlike the Italians, who sought in classic culture beauty of form and refinement of taste, the Northern nations seized upon the practical side of the revival of letters. The determination to see things as they were without reference to tradition or authority was the dynamic force of a movement which led by no uncertain steps to the overthrow of the ecclesiastical fabric. The stress which the Dutch and German humanists laid upon the right of private judgment, their appeals to the supremacy of reason, their insistence upon the union of morality with religion, brought them more directly into collision with the Church of Rome than the pagan morals or bantering incredulity of the Italians.

In his liberality of thought, his encyclopædic

knowledge, his unsatisfied craving for study, Rabelais is a true child of the Renaissance. He declares war on all that the Middle Ages had worshipped—the love of martial conquest, the life of contemplation, mortification of the flesh, scholasticism, and the sounding words which scarcely concealed their emptiness. The inspiration of the movement is upon him. He feels the ecstasy of its renewed life. But its effect on his mind was widely different from the artistic passion of Italy or the practical devotion of Germany. The ideal which he seeks is freedom of thought, the right of every man to pursue knowledge how and when he will, the liberty to worship God as he understood His divinity. He protests against intolerance, but he cares nothing for doctrinal definitions; to him dogmas, whether of Protestantism or Catholicism, are accidents of time and circumstance. He looked for a gradual reconstruction of the world through the spread of education and of science, a process which was necessarily slow, and, in the face of surrounding circumstances, impossible. The foes of culture were the same as they had ever been: on the one hand the priesthood, on the other the unlearned—the narrowness of fanaticism or the panic fear of ignorance. It was because authority checked speculation, upheld shams, discountenanced study, asserted absurd pretensions, and bound living men to dead forms by the iron chains of tradition, that he arraigns the Papacy,

the monasteries and all the learned professions in one sweeping, comprehensive indictment. "Pantagruel" is an attempt to promote the course of progress in France by the removal of everything that obstructed its advance in religion, law, education, institutions, or society. And the basis of Rabelais' humanitarian enthusiasm is his faith in the natural goodness of mankind. Restraint creates the evil which it is designed to check. Shake off the fetters, and the innate potentialities of human excellence will have room to expand. Meanwhile the true wisdom is that of the Pantagruelian philosopher, who strips himself of all that is transitory and passing, possesses his own soul in patience, labours all his life to advance the spread of knowledge, strives to discover the "great perhaps," and dies in the bosom of the Church in which he was born.

The absorbing interest of Rabelais' attitude towards the French Renaissance consists in its representative character, and in his relation through the sixteenth-century movement to the intellectual changes which preceded the Revolution. There was a period in his life when he inclined towards the Reformation, and readers of "Pantagruel" in its existing form and its English translation<sup>1</sup> may

<sup>1</sup> Motteux, his English editor and translator, who was himself a Protestant, omits Rabelais' references to the Calvinists of Geneva. Thus, in the fourth book, among the "monstrous brood of eavesdropping dissemblers, superstitious pope-mongers, and priest-ridden bigots" which anti-nature had engendered, Rabelais includes "*les démoniacles Calvins imposteurs de Genève.*"

possibly imagine that he was always a Protestant at heart. Calvin says of him that he had once tasted the Gospel,<sup>1</sup> and in the first book of "Pantagruel" he showed himself to have been a supporter of Reuchlin against Ortuin and the theologians of Cologne. He treats the Papacy with scant ceremony, attacks indulgences, pilgrimages, and superstitious observances; he scoffs at the purchase of pardons; he lashes with the full force of his satire the vices of the monastic system. But these features of his satire are in no degree proofs of his Protestantism. More positive evidence of his inclination towards the Reformed doctrines will be found in his advocacy of a return to the simplicity of Gospel-teaching, his insistence with St. Paul on the spirit as opposed to the letter, his education of Pantagruel to read the Bible in Hebrew and Greek, and finally in Pantagruel's promise that in his kingdom of Utopia the Gospel shall be preached "purement, simplement, et entièrement, si que les abus d'un tas des papelars et faulx prophètes, qui ont par constitutions humaines et inventions dépravées envenimé tout

Motteux omits this last addition. Also it seems certain that the fifth book, published ten years after the death of Rabelais, contains a considerable number of Protestant additions, possibly from the pen of Henri Estienne.

<sup>1</sup> "Quotquot videmus hodie Lucianicos homines, qui totam Christi religionem subsannant! . . Alii (ut Rabelæsus, Deperius, et Goveanus) gustato Evangelio, eâdem cœcitate sunt percussi. Cur istud? nisi quia illud sacrum vitæ æternæ pignus, sacrilegâ ludendi aut ridendi audaciâ ante profanârant?—*De Scandalis*.

le monde, seront dentour moy exterminiez." But in time this feeling changed. The intellectual tyranny of Geneva became more distasteful to his mind than the cautious liberty of Rome. He found, and with him a crowd of Frenchmen whose latent leanings towards Protestantism were similarly checked, that the Huguenot leader was not the apostle of liberty, but that Calvin was more rapacious in his attacks on human freedom than the great Pope-hawk himself. The narrowness of the Protestant dogmas repelled him, and although up to a certain point he had fought by the side of the Reformers, the alliance was gradually exchanged for hostility. Calvin wrote against him as the preacher of a creedless, soulless Epicureanism; Henri Estienne complained that "*il jette souvent des pierres dans notre jardin*"; Ramus denounced him as an atheist; Robert Estienne reproached the men from whom he had himself fled for his own life because they had not burned the author of "*Pantagruel*." Rabelais was not backward in his reprisals. He had attacked the fasts of the Catholics, but he did not find that the meat diet of the Calvinists made them more tolerant or less suspicious; both were equally enemies of that science which was his mistress. His humanitarian fervour was diametrically opposed to the Huguenot doctrine of original sin, and he pours forth his ridicule upon the "*yea verily*" of Calvin's catechism. The religious ideal which he puts forward in *Thélème* is neither Calvinist

nor Roman. He excludes from his abbey all who foment religious discord ; he foresees the extinction of art and letters which will inevitably result from the impending struggle between Protestant and Catholic, and he throws in his lot with neither the one nor the other.

Rabelais held aloof from the conflict because he saw too clearly the faults of both the combatants. His physical temperament also tended to make him a spectator rather than an actor. More eager to attain liberty of thought than doctrinal truth, Rabelais was totally without the martyr-spirit. He shudders at the execution of Jean Caturce at Toulouse in 1532 ; but while Dolet openly protests against it, Rabelais' policy, like that of Pantagruel, was rather to avoid similar dangers. Pantagruel and his attendants visit Toulouse, " mais ils n'y demeurent guères quand ils virent qu'ils faisaient brûler leurs régents tous vifs comme harengs saurets." And the times were full of peril. Jean Leclerc, the wool-carder of Meaux, was tortured and burned at Metz in 1525. Louis de Berquin, the friend of the Marguerite des Marguerites, was the first victim of a Commission of Enquiry, which resembled Alva's Tribunal of Blood. Bonaventure Despériers broke out into open infidelity in his "Cymbalum Mundi," and committed suicide to avoid the inevitable result. Clément Marot was imprisoned for eating bacon on Friday :

" Par le morbleu ! voilà Clément—  
Prenez-le ; il a mangé le lard ! " :



and finally died in exile. Anne Dubourg was disgraced and at last put to death for his religious opinions. For the same reason Étienne Dolet was tortured, hanged, and burned on the Place Maubert in Paris. Three of these men were Rabelais' most intimate friends, and he himself was more than once obliged to flee for his life. He well knew that the king, in his paroxysms of piety, was, to use the phrase of Brantôme, "*un peu rigoureux à faire brusler vifs les hérétiques de son temps.*" He was ready to go, as he said himself, "*jusqu'au bûcher exclusivement*" in matters of opinion. But, like Marot, he feared the flames.

"L'oisiveté des prêtres et cagots  
 Je la dirois, mais gare les fagots ;  
 Et des abus dont l'Église est fourrée,  
 J'en parlerois, mais gare la bourrée."

It is not, therefore, surprising that Rabelais, in doctrinal, if not in disciplinary, reforms, imitated the cautious silence of Jean du Bellay and other free-thinking prelates among his contemporaries. But meanwhile the writings of the great vernacular satirist leavened the masses with something of his own discontent at the development of the struggle between the dominant religion and its Protestant rival. Rabelais represents the scientific impulse of the French Renaissance, its passion for liberty of thought, its humanitarian fervour, its hopes of the Reforming movement and its disappointment in the Genevan tyranny, its eternal acquiescence in the established faith, and its growing scepticism

and gradual negation of all creeds. And the stern restraint of the feelings which the Renaissance engendered, and which Rabelais cast into a popular form, gives additional importance and significance to his writings. Checked by the Church and by the selfish monarchy which succeeded the break-up of the feudal aristocracy, the ideas expressed in "Pantagruel" assumed more formidable and more menacing symptoms. It is worthy of note that, at the Revolution, Rabelais was recognised for the first time since the sixteenth century, as one of the master minds of the world.

During all periods that have witnessed great changes men are known only in reference to some particular point where their existence touches the broad stream of history. Stirring centuries like the sixteenth are too absorbed in the interests of masses to follow those of individuals; consequently, the materials for the life of Rabelais are scanty. The "Lues Boswelliana," which chronicles with infinite particularity the everyday doings of private persons, belongs to modern tastes and tamer times to compensate. In the case of Rabelais, for the lack of authentic memorials, a popular biography has been created, resembling that which surrounds the name of Shakespeare. But three centuries after the death of the satirist we may be pardoned if we lay little stress on the elaborate discussions which have centred round episodes in his career, and chronicle the commonly accepted facts of his life without entering into a criticism of disputed points.

The father of Rabelais was the landlord of the "Lamproie" at Chinon, and was also the proprietor or the tenant of a vineyard in the neighbouring village of Seuilly, which lies on the left-hand side of the road from Chinon to Saumur. At Chinon, or at Seuilly, François Rabelais was born in 1483. Probably Rabelais never knew the meaning of maternal affection. The only domestic relationship on which he dwells with any tenderness is that of father and son—the love of Gargantua for Grandgousier, of Pantagruel for Gargantua. It is possible that a passage in the fifth book of "Pantagruel" may be coloured by the bitterness of personal feeling. On the Ringing Island Pantagruel asks Ædituus how the clerk-hawks are bred, if the Pope-hawk is bred from the cardin-hawks, and the cardin-hawks from the bis-hawks, and the bis-hawks from the clerk-hawks. When he hears the answer, he is surprised that women, who bear their sons nine months in their womb, cannot endure them nine years or even seven, in their house; but clap a shirt over the urchin's clothes, lop a few hairs from his crown, and by some Pythagorean metempsychosis transform the boy into a clerk-hawk. Rabelais may be here recalling his own experience. Be this as it may, he was at an early age set apart for the priesthood. Near the Clos de la Devinière at Seuilly stood the Abbey of St. Sepulchre, and there the boy began his education. From Seuilly he passed to the Convent of La Basmette, near

Angers, and possibly to the University of Angers. It was at this period of his life that he made the acquaintance of the famous family of Du Bellay, as well as of Geoffroi d'Estissac, afterwards Bishop of Maillezais.

In 1511 Rabelais was admitted into priest's orders as a Franciscan friar in the fraternity established at Fontenay-le-Comte, in Lower Poitou. Like Erasmus, he disgusted the friars by his secular leaning. He had not taken the vow of ignorance, and he was probably more galled by the restraints upon intellectual pleasures than by those upon licentious indulgences. Science was even now his austere mistress, and, in spite of his writings, his life, like that of Balzac, may have been free from sensual vices. Relying upon the Vulgate, the Church steadily set her face against the study of Greek and Hebrew. But Rabelais and his friend Amy taught themselves both languages, and corresponded with Budæus and other scholars. From scholarship to Lutheranism seemed to the Franciscans a natural step. Rabelais' orthodoxy was doubted, and the suspicion was confirmed by his purchase of books printed in Germany. He was suspected by his brethren, and his studious habits and satirical tongue made him still more unpopular. Numerous stories are told of his escapades, immoralities, and profanities, and if any of these are true they may have contributed to his leaving the Franciscan Order. Popular tradition relates that he was condemned by the chapter to

the terrible punishment of imprisonment *in pace*—to be walled up in his cell and fed only on bread and water during the term of his natural life—that the sentence was executed, and that he was only rescued by the armed intervention of André Tiraqueau, the governor of the district of Fontenay, and himself a native of the town. Where truth begins and legend ends is uncertain; but two facts stand out beyond dispute. He received some notable kindness from the famous juriconsult, of whom he speaks as “le bon, le docte, le sage, le tant humain et tant équitable Tiraqueau”; and in 1524 he had left the Franciscans with a papal indulgence obtained for him by D’Estissac, enabling him to enter the Abbey of Maillezais, belonging to the scholarly and learned Order of the Benedictines. But he was not long contented with his new situation. It is even doubtful whether he ever entered the abbey; at any rate he speedily assumed the secular garb, and once more became a citizen of the world. But his monastic experiences had left upon his mind an ineffaceable impression. He never spares the monks or forgets his hatred of the class. Throughout his crowd of actors he attributes no good characteristic to the priesthood.

The next five years of Rabelais’ life are difficult to follow. Part of the period was spent at Maillezais or at Ligugé under the protection of D’Estissac, an easy-going, semi-pagan prelate, who winked at the ecclesiastical offence of his old

school-fellow and made him his secretary. Like Rousseau at Les Charmettes, Rabelais dabbled in poetry and devoted himself to botany. It was along the banks of the river Clain that he acquired that knowledge of herbs and plants which appears in "Pantagruel," and which he applied to the practice of medicine. Other friends of his youth had been the brothers Du Bellay, and Rabelais next appears as secretary to Guillaume du Bellay, Sieur de Langey, who, according to Brantôme, was a skilful soldier, a loyal servant, but no courtier; "il ne sçait ni quand le roy se lève, ni quand le roy se couche, mais il sçait bien où sont les ennemis." It was at the Château of Glatigny, near Langey, that Rabelais revised and corrected Guillaume du Bellay's Latin treatise on the stratagems of war, as well as the Latin poems and discourses of his brother Jean du Bellay, Bishop of Paris, cardinal and diplomatist. Part of the house which belonged to Rabelais in the village of Langey was standing at the end of the eighteenth century, and at Sondag, a neighbouring hamlet, the tradition is preserved that he was curé of the parish.

In September 1530 the name of Rabelais was entered as a student on the register of the University of Montpellier, where Louis XII had recently founded four chairs to promote the study of medicine. There he passed through the prescribed course with distinction, if any credence is to be attached to popular legends. A doctor's gown,

which was believed to be his, was for many years carefully preserved, and every medical pupil was invested with it after passing his fifth examination. The ceremony was said to commemorate the recovery by Rabelais of certain privileges, of which the University was deprived by Chancellor Duprat. But it seems at least probable that the gown, embroidered with the letters F.R.C., was not the gown of Franciscus Rabelæsus Chinonensis, but that of François Ranchin, the great reforming Chancellor who governed the University between 1610 and 1620.

In 1532, after the delivery of the public lectures necessary for a bachelor's degree in medicine, Rabelais left Montpellier for Lyons, which, after Paris, was now the chief literary centre of France. The sixteenth century was the most splendid epoch in its civilisation. As the commercial link between France and Italy, Lyons had been the first city to profit by the arts and refinements of the Italian Renaissance. Sébastien Gryphe made the printing presses of Lyons famous throughout Europe ; Jean Grollier, the Mæcenas of the age, was an inhabitant of the town, and round him gathered a knot of distinguished friends. Though the Société Angélique, in which antiquarians have seen one of the earliest of literary societies, had no organised existence, many intellectual interests were represented among the citizens of Lyons, or among the strangers who, like Rabelais, Marot, Dolet, and Despériers, were attracted within its walls. Among the inhabitants

were Pagnini, the Orientalist and Hebrew lexicographer; Pierre Tolet, one of the most skilled physicians of the day; Guillaume du Choul, the antiquarian and archæologist; Symphorien Champier, the founder of many public institutions, whose munificence is not only celebrated in "Pantagruel" but commemorated in the street nomenclature of Lyons: Michel Sève, poet, and, as Joachim du Bellay calls him, "docte aux doctes esclaircy"; Barthélemy Aneau, principal of the Collège de Lyon, poet, translator, and parent of the French opera. Nor was Lyons without its literary ladies. Though Louise Labé, "la belle cordière," was only seven years old in 1532, yet women like Pernette du Guillet and the sisters Claudine and Sibylle Sève were poetesses whose reputation has not yet wholly disappeared.

To Lyons Rabelais was mainly attracted by the fame of its printing presses. There he published two medical treatises, and two Latin pieces which he erroneously supposed to be "*ex reliquis venerandæ antiquitatis*."<sup>1</sup> He also assisted in the correction of the learned works which issued from the press of Gryphe. With literature he united the practice of medicine, for he had been appointed

<sup>1</sup> (1) *Hippocratis ac Galeni libri aliquot. Ex recognitione Fr. Rabelæsi. Lugduni apud Gryphium, 1532.* (2) *Johannis Mainardi Ferrariensis Epistolarum medicinalium tomus secundus. Lugduni apud Gryphium, 1532.* (3) *Ex reliquis venerandæ Antiquitatis Lucii Cuspidi Testamentum; item Contractus venditionis antiquis Romanorum temporibus initus. Lugduni: Gryphius. 1532.*



physician to the Hôtel-Dieu of the town. It is to be hoped that he succeeded better as a doctor than he had hitherto prospered as a man of letters. Piqued by the failure of his previous works, he revenged himself upon the taste of the day by a parody on the popular tales of chivalry. "The Great and Inestimable Chronicle of the Great and Enormous Giant Gargantua" was composed, as the author tells us, in the intervals allotted to eating and drinking. It was published in 1532.

The success of the Chronicle was as gigantic as its hero. It is founded on the popular legends of Touraine. Gargantua was one of the Celtic deities of Brittany; but south of the Loire he was transformed into an ogre. According to tradition he travels through the country in search of adventures, bearing his servants in his pocket, and followed by a goblin loaded with provisions. When their master pleases they halt and dine. The servants cook the food and lay the table, and when the giant feeds cast into his mouth the salt and mustard with shovels, while the goblin pours down his throat a dozen barrels of wine. Then he sleeps thirty hours at a stretch, guarded by his attendants. Traces of the legend are scattered all over the country; Gargantua's quoits, footprints, pulpits and ninepins are almost universal. This popular hero Rabelais made the central figure of his romance, linking him on to the legends of Arthur and of Merlin. The Chronicle is a mere farrago of nonsense, a burlesque on the giants and

enchantments of romance, intended for sale by the travelling *bisuaux* at country fairs and markets in the company of "Jehan de Paris," "Robert le Diable," or "Richard Sans Peur." Yet there were sold, says Rabelais, more copies in two months than will be sold of the Bible in nine years.

Encouraged by his success, Rabelais in the same year brought out a sequel to the Chronicle in "Pantagruel." The work is no longer a mere extravagance, or a boisterous caricature of romantic literature. The fiction has assumed a serious character; it has a design and a purpose. King Arthur, Merlin, Gog and Magog, and other legendary heroes have been disbanded, and Pantagruel, though a giant, stands in the streets of Paris. Don Quixote, the burlesque hero of popular fiction, became the model of ideal chivalry; so Pantagruel assumes human characteristics and changes into the noblest and wisest of mortals. With all the freshness of twenty, yet with the ripe experience of fifty, Rabelais thus began his laugh at the world. Molière wooed with persistency the Queen of Tragedy before he discovered that he reigned supreme in the heart of the Comic Muse. So it was with Rabelais. It is not the least singular feature in his strange career that half a century elapsed before he recognised the natural bent of his genius and knew himself to be a born satirist. Into this new direction he pours all the treasures of his varied experience, all the materials which

he had gathered as a Franciscan friar, a Benedictine monk, a secular priest, a medical student and a doctor, the secretary of a bishop and a great captain, the companion of wits, scholars, soldiers, and statesmen. The rich vein of broad and jovial humour upon which Rabelais had struck in "Pantagruel" could not have been a new discovery. Its flashes must have often set the bishop's table in a roar, if it had never convulsed the *frayter* at Fontenay-le-Comte. What Rabelais had discovered was not the existence of a gift of which he was previously unaware, but the faculty of talking to the world with the same unconstrained ease with which he conversed among his most familiar associates.

When he had once tested his powers he exercised them without apparent fatigue. Besides the "Gargantuan Chronicle" and "Pantagruel," which were written within a few months of each other, he issued an "Almanach" in 1532,<sup>1</sup> which was afterwards annually continued up to 1550, and the "Pantagruelian Prognostication,"<sup>2</sup> in which he attacked the so-called science of astrology. In 1534 Jean du Bellay, passing through Lyons on a diplomatic mission to Rome, invited Rabelais to accompany him. The proposal was accepted.

<sup>1</sup> Almanach pour MDXXXII calculé sur le méridien de la noble cité de Lyon et sur le climat du royaume de France.

<sup>2</sup> Pantagrueline prognostification Certaine veritable et ifallible pour lã mil DXXXIII nouuellemēt composée au profit et aduisemēt des gēs estourdis et musars de nature par maistre Alcofribas Architriclin dudiet Pantagruel.

During the whole of his stay in Italy Rabelais studied with all a scholar's enthusiasm the antiquities of Rome, superintended excavations, made voluminous notes, and prepared to write a book on Roman archæology. He found himself, however, forestalled by a Milanese named Marliani, whose work he subsequently published at Lyons, with additions and corrections. His prolonged absence of many months cost him his post at the Hôtel-Dieu of Lyons. But he by no means neglected his medical studies. It was now that he delivered his anatomical lecture, illustrated by a public dissection of the body of a criminal who had been hanged in the city. This anatomical illustration was probably the first ever witnessed in France, and the excitement which it created is evidenced by the verses of Dolet. His freedom from professional ties gave him greater leisure for literature. In 1534 he published his edition of Marliani's "*Topographia*,"<sup>1</sup> with a dedication to Cardinal du Bellay. In the following year he produced his "*Vie inestimable du grand Gargantua*," which definitely superseded the original Chronicle and now forms the first book of "*Pantagruel*." It is still full of absurdities and extravagances, but the form and the matter are recast, so that the work may be an appropriate prelude to its successor. In tone and spirit it is entirely changed. Like Luther, Rabelais had seen the corruption of

<sup>1</sup> Joannis-Bartolomæi Marliani mediolensis topographia antiquæ Romæ. Lyon: Seb. Gryph. 1534.

the Papacy at its very centre; he had visited Rome in the train of a cardinal who was a pagan philosopher rather than an ecclesiastic. "Gargantua" was written at the time when he hoped most from, and was most inclined to, the Reformed doctrines. In "Pantagruel" he had satirised the affected gibberish of pedantic scholars, the absurdities of the technical jargon of lawyers, the trivialities of the scholastic theology; but in "Gargantua" he pours forth all his satire upon the monks, and the glaring contrast which was afforded by the capabilities and the actualities of the monastic system assails the superstitious extravagances of the day and those who encouraged them for their own profit, and sketches a wild poetic scheme which contains many practical suggestions for an ideal ecclesiastical socialism.

"Gargantua" is full of audacious satire against the ecclesiastical system, and there were many passages in the original edition which would have brought Rabelais within the reach of the heresy-hunters. He had touched the shield of the Church with the point of his spear, and, in view of the hostility which he had aroused, it is not strange to find him once more at Rome in 1536. The pantheism of Leo X had made strictness in dogmatic faith for the time impossible. The Papal city was the safest sanctuary for all whose orthodoxy was doubtful. To this second period of Rabelais' sojourn at Rome belong his letters to the Bishop of Maillezais, which give a minute

account of the disposal of his time, the confidence which Cardinal du Bellay reposed in him, his studies of archæology, botany, and languages, and his interest in contemporary politics. His prime object was, doubtless, to put himself *en règle* with the Church; he received the Papal permission to re-enter a Benedictine monastery and to practise medicine, with the restriction, universal in the case of the clergy, of not using fire or the knife in any surgical operation. The commencement of the following year found him at Paris and present at a banquet to Dolet; at its close he was at Montpellier, where he took his doctor's degree in medicine and lectured for two years.

In 1540 he came to Paris, to enter the collegiate church of St. Maur des Fossés, where du Bellay had procured him a canonry. Here he might have led a life of ease in a spot which he described as “un paradis de salubrité, aménité, sérénité, commodité, délices de tous honnêtes plaisirs d'agriculture et vie rustique.” But he had obtained leave to practise medicine wherever he wished; and his enthusiasm for the art, together with his roving disposition, made him a wanderer in many parts of France. During this period he composed the third book of “Pantagruel.” It appeared in 1546 with his name attached, instead of the anagram Alcofribas Nasier, which he had hitherto adopted. By the first two books Rabelais had not only provoked the hostility of all the monas-

teries in the land, but aroused the enmity of the Parliament of Paris and of the Sorbonne, the most jealous guardian of orthodoxy. The great protectress of men of letters, Marguerite of Navarre, was living remote from the world, wrapped in mystic contemplation; Dolet, Des-périers, and Marot had been burned at the stake, driven to suicide, or forced into exile for smaller offences than his own. He required all his caution to escape their fate. The third book was read by Francis I before its publication, and appeared "avec privilége du roi" in 1546.

The death of Francis I in the next year, followed as it was by the disgrace of du Bellay, left Rabelais without a protector. His enemies seized their opportunity to attack him. He fled precipitately to Metz, where he with difficulty supported himself as a doctor, and afterwards made his way to Rome. The birth of the second son of Henry II in 1549 was the signal for great rejoicings at the Papal Court, and Rabelais assisted in preparing the different spectacles with which the occasion was celebrated. He sent an account in several letters addressed to the Cardinal of Lorraine, who had succeeded Jean du Bellay in the favour of the Court. "*La Sciomachie et festins faits à Rome*"<sup>1</sup> procured for Rabelais his restoration to France, as well as the favour of the Cardinal, who made

<sup>1</sup> *La Sciomachie et festins faicts à Rome au palays du R. Cardinal du Bellay, pour l'heureuse naissance de M. le duc d'Orléans.* Lyon : Seb. Gryph. 1549.

him curé of Meudon. During his wanderings Rabelais had completed a fourth book; but he felt that even the powerful protection of the Guises was not sufficiently strong to save him from the Sorbonne. He therefore obtained the leave of Henry II to publish the book, and dedicated it to the Cardinal Odet de Châtillon, who, as the elder brother of Admiral Coligny, led the opposition to the Guises. Thus secured on all sides, the fourth book of "Pantagruel" was published in 1552. But, though it appeared "avec privilège du roi," the Parliament of Paris forbade its sale and summoned its author before their bar. Ultimately the sale was permitted, but at the cost of Rabelais' surrender of his ecclesiastical benefices. In February 1552 he resigned his preferments, and a year later died in Paris in the Rue des Jardins, and was buried in the cemetery of the parish of St. Paul. But all traces of the place of his interment have been lost for upwards of two centuries.

The peaceful picture of the close of the life of the curé of Meudon is probably apocryphal. It is said that the last days of Rabelais as a parish priest were exemplary. His house was the resort of the learned, but its doors were never closed to the poor. He had no infirmities, except his enormous size. He had formed an excellent library of rare and curious books, and retained his love of study to the last. No day passed of which he did not spend some portion in teaching



the children to read and sing. People flocked from Paris to hear him preach or celebrate mass, or to enjoy his genial hospitality. Thus at Meudon his life passed tranquilly away, and there he died at peace with the Church and in the odour of sanctity. So runs the pleasant legend of the venerable curé. But the facts of history are inexorable. It is at least doubtful whether Rabelais ever exercised the functions of parish priest at Meudon; it is certain that he did not hold the cure more than two years, that he had resigned it before his death, and that he died in Paris. On the other hand, his death-bed is surrounded with legends which are less edifying and perhaps equally fabulous. As in his lifetime numbers of books were attributed to him which he indignantly repudiated, so after his death his enemies vied with his indiscreet friends in associating preposterous stories with his name. Broad jests and floating witticisms current among the vulgar were fathered upon Rabelais, on the principle that such traditions gain in reality by association with a well-known figure. Every stage in his death is accompanied with some farcical impropriety, and it is now too late to sever truth from falsehood. Even his mule did not escape from slander. Imitating the irreverence of her master, she entered a church and drank the holy water. Rabelais' will is said to have been made in the words, "I have nothing; I owe much; the rest I leave to the poor." But twenty-six years before the death of the supposed testator

the same disposition of worldly goods is quoted by Erasmus in a letter to Budæus. Tradition relates that, after he had received extreme unction, he told a friend "qu'on lui avait graissé ses bottes pour le grand voyage"; that he called for his Benedictine domino, in order to receive the blessing of those "qui in Domino moriuntur"; that he greeted the page of Cardinal de Châtillon, who had been sent to ask him how he was, with, "Je vais quérir un grand Peut-être. Monseigneur est au nid de la pie; dis-lui qu'il s'y tienne. Pour toi, tu ne seras jamais qu'un fou"; that he saluted the priest who brought him the Sacrament with the words, "Je crois voir mon Dieu tel qu'il entra à Jérusalem triomphant et porté sur un âne"; and, finally, that his last utterance was, "Tirez le rideau; la farce est jouée." The drop of the curtain is as old as Augustus. "*Ex uno disce omnia.*"

No Life of Rabelais was written till a century after his death. In the meantime his true features were forgotten and distorted. The character of his writings invited misrepresentation. On the serious side of "Pantagruel" the clergy, the monks, the Protestants, were interested in blackening his character, in order to minimise the effect of his satires. On its lighter side the enormous indecencies exposed him to the charge of personal immorality, while the gigantic buffooneries gave colour to his identification with countless popular stories which presented him in the light of a

drunken jester without reverence for things human or divine. Both directly and indirectly he had offended the lawyers. He laughs at their interminable processes, at the ignorant idleness of judges like Bridoye, at the hair-splitting chicanery of the law-courts. He ridicules their treatises, which, like "*Tariboles de Droict*," buried the broad principles of Roman jurisprudence under a mass of subtle distinctions and profitless commentary. So long as he had treated of their civil processes he had only mocked; but when he touches upon their administration of criminal justice he brands the profession with indelible disgrace. The Furred Law Cats and the Gripenalls were not likely to be tender to the memory of Rabelais. His caricatures of polite euphuism, his ridicule of elegant affectations of style, his contempt for the pedantic use of hybrid Latinisms, ran counter to the literary creed of the day. He did not, like the members of the *Pléiade*,<sup>1</sup> disdain the old French romances as fit only for the floral games of Toulouse, but founded his satirical work on a cycle of myths deeply rooted in the popular imagination. He was, moreover, personally disliked by two of the leaders of the poetical clique which zealously supported the Parliament and the Sorbonne. Ronsard was his neighbour at Meudon, and saw in Rabelais his successful rival in the favour not only of France,

<sup>1</sup> Ronsard, Joachim du Bellay, Rémi Bellau, Jean Dorat, Jean-Antoine Baïf, Ponthus de Tisard, Étienne Jodelle.

but of their common patron, the Cardinal of Lorraine. Joachim du Bellay, a spare, vinegar-faced, melancholy dreamer, had been his companion at Rome in the household of the Cardinal du Bellay, and no two men could have been more antipathetic in their views of life. While Rabelais lived the Pléiade kept silence. No sooner was he dead than they assailed his memory. The satirical verses of Ronsard and du Bellay gave the permanence of literary form to the hostile estimate of his character. Du Bellay wrote two Latin epitaphs upon him, in one of which he nicknames him Pamphagus, in the other Œnophilus. Ronsard's satire is more bitter. In his "Építaphe d'un Biberon" he speaks of Rabelais as the

" . . . bon biberon qui beuvoit  
Toujours cependant qu'il vivoit,"

and as the boon companion who

" . . . parmi des escuelles grasses  
Sans nulle honte se touillant<sup>1</sup>  
Alloit dans le vin barbouillant  
Comme une grenouille en la fange."

Those who reflect upon the known facts of Rabelais' life, the uncompromising boldness of his satires, the persecutions which he voluntarily risked by his zeal for reform; those who consider his passionate pursuit of science, his enthusiasm for his multifarious studies, his encyclopædic knowledge, and the extraordinary width of his learned

<sup>1</sup> *Se touiller* is a local word, used at the present day in the districts of Perche and Maine, = "to dirty oneself."

interests ; those, finally, who remember the reputation and the position of the men with whom he habitually associated on terms of intimate friendship, will find it difficult to accept the hostile estimate of Rabelais' character. If we turn from the facts of his life to the general tone of his writings, the difficulty of reconciling the two portraits and of discriminating between truth and falsehood confronts the student under a different form. Here too the question arises, Which is the genuine man, the eager reformer or the jovial boon companion, the audacious satirist or the vinous buffoon ? But it is worth noticing that only old men like Grandgousier, or ignorant animals such as Friar John, drink to excess ; that it is only Panurge, the coward, the knave, the cynic, who wallows in debauchery ; that the true hero, Pantagruel, indulges in no undue gratification of sensual appetites ; and that in the ideal Abbey of Thélème there is no banqueting-hall, no cellar, no kitchen, and no mention of the pleasures of the table or the senses. Further, it is unfair to test the character of writers by the tone of their writings. Molière was a silent observer, Béranger serious and melancholy, Balzac absorbed in the pursuit of letters. Lastly, the negative evidence does not stand alone. Numerous passages in "Pantagruel" prove that Rabelais had his high thoughts, his pure ideals, his serious moments, his deep religious susceptibilities ; that his soul was burdened by hours of mystic

melancholy, was subject to unutterable speculative longings, and capable of grand poetic flashes.

The framework on which the five parts of "Pantagruel" are hung may be thus briefly sketched: The first book, which was printed in 1535, and is, therefore, in order of publication, the second, relates the miraculous birth of Gargantua, his education, his exploits, and his friendship for Friar John of the Chopping Knives. The second book, printed in 1532, appears to be in its early portions an inferior repetition of the first. It describes the birth of Pantagruel, the gigantic son of Gargantua, who is sent to be educated in Paris, where he meets Panurge and engages him as a companion. The first two books were published under the signature of Alcofribas Nasier. The third, printed in 1546, was the first to which Rabelais appended his name. The fourth book appeared in 1552, and the fifth in 1564, eleven years after the death of Rabelais. In the last three parts Panurge is the chief figure. They tell us how he fared as the ruler of Salmigondin; how he desired to take a wife, but fears that his marriage may prove unhappy; how, after consulting every one in vain, it was agreed that Pantagruel, Friar John, and himself should inquire of the Oracle of the Holy Bottle; and how they visited strange countries in the course of their voyage.

Upon this absurd basis is piled mountain-high

a mass of miscellaneous matter. The book is absolutely unique in the literature of the world. Here, raked together, are anecdotes, dissertations, quaint scraps of obscure learning, dialogues, sarcasm, wit, humour, proverbs, allegory, and astounding obscenity. Written with long intervals between the several parts, "Pantagruel" represents all the changes which the opinions of Rabelais underwent between fifty and seventy. It passes from the extravagant caricature of the Gargantuan chronicle, in which it originated, to a blending of sarcasm and burlesque, and finally to satire, open, undisguised, audacious. The tone is changed. In the first two books Rabelais writes as a reformer of the school of Erasmus; in the last three he becomes more and more sceptical, less hopeful of the fulfilment of his ideal. The illusions of his comparative youth are dispelled; universal liberty seems as distant as when he was condemned to the punishment *in pace*; his laughter grows harsh and bitter. Thus "Pantagruel" affords a concrete illustration of the passage which France underwent from the gay freedom of the Renaissance to the gloomy distrust which was bred of the fanatical intolerance of both Catholics and Protestants. The theory that the whole work is allegorical, and that the actors are real historical characters, may be dismissed as trivial. The construction of keys is wasted labour, and, if shades can laugh, the "gros rire tourangeau" must shake the nether world at a search as profitless as that for the

philosopher's stone. Like all great writers, Rabelais does not paint pictures of his contemporaries ; he puts together many different features that have struck him, but portraiture is not his object. He might say with Molière, "Je prends mon bien où je le trouve." He makes the same casual references to men of the time which Swift makes to Whig and Tory leaders in *Blefuscus* and *Liliput*. "*Pantagruel*" satirises the social fabric of the sixteenth century ; but it is unnecessary to reduce its gigantic proportions to the dwarfish stature of a libel upon a particular Court. Rabelais is a universal moralist, not a satirist of individuals, and his work is a general criticism of the world, a Titanic outburst of laughter against shams, a sweeping protest against every form of intellectual restraint, a comprehensive indictment of all obstructions to mental liberty.

"*Pantagruel*" is for students of costume a book of fashions, enumerating the stuffs, the colours, the dresses, the jewels, the furs in which mediæval society was adorned. For historians of games it is a book of sport, of falconry and venery, of manly exercises and diversions. Of games at cards alone Rabelais enumerates more than two hundred different combinations. It gives a plan of domestic architecture, an inventory of household furniture, a menu of mediæval banquets as well as of rustic fare. It is a treatise on the art of medicine, a manual of anatomical science, a handbook of botany, a compendium of the processes and pro-



cedure of mediæval law. It gives a catalogue of the contents of monastic libraries, and from it may be compiled a diary of the daily life of a Franciscan friar. It affords a specimen of the dialectics of logicians and the philosophical exercises of the doctors of the Sorbonne. It is a valuable monograph on mediæval education, a treatise on the arts of war and navigation. It enumerates all the known pieces of ordnance from the culverin to the falcon ; it is a museum of the mail, an armoury of the weapons, of the Middle Ages. It is a repertory which contains the superstitious practices of the day, astrological science, Virgilian lotteries, and all the current modes of presaging the future. It is a "Bibliothèque bleue" of rustic romances, a collection of anecdotes and proverbs, a magazine of scraps of popular songs, a glossary of local idioms, a dictionary of dialects, an inexhaustible vocabulary of picturesque provincialisms. In a word, it is an enormous scrap-bag of miscellaneous articles.

No adequate impression could be conveyed, within reasonable limits, of the multifarious contents of such a work. Three points may, however, be selected—mainly from the first book—to illustrate the method in which the various subjects are treated—education, ecclesiastical abuses, and Rabelais' Utopian ideal.

The first serious topic which is touched upon in "Pantagruel" is education ; for this, in Rabelais' conception of Renaissance movement, was the all-

important factor. Grandgousier, who belongs to the rude, easy-going age that was passing away, gives his son Gargantua the ordinary education of a youth of noble birth in the Middle Ages. He is brought up like a page among the women in the licentious atmosphere of a court. He is taught to read by a tutor who consumes five years and three months in the task. At the end of that time he can say his alphabet as well backwards as forwards. Next he is exercised in logical and grammatical gymnastics, which destroy thought in order to preserve its forms. He learns by heart, and word for word, antiquated treatises and obsolete textbooks of the twelfth century. In this way he spends thirty-five years and two months. His body is as neglected as his mind. He is told that it is waste of time for him to wash or clean himself; consequently he only smooths his hair with the German comb—that is, with his fingers and thumb. After gorging himself at breakfast he hears from twenty-six to thirty masses, mumbles the Hours and his litanies, and, with a Paternoster from St. Claude, says more prayers than sixteen hermits could have offered. Then, with his heart in the kitchen, he studies for half an hour. At his dinner he eats to excess, and sleeps for three hours “without thinking or speaking any harm.” He wakes to drink, read a little, gabble more prayers, visit the kitchen in order to see what meat is on the spit, sups, goes to bed, and sleeps till eight the next morning. Gargantua learns his lessons per-

fectly, studies hard, and satisfies his tutors and examiners; yet every day he becomes "more foolish, doited, and blockish."

Seeing that Gargantua thus went from bad to worse, Grandgousier consults a friend about his son. The friend advises that the new learning should be tried, and offers to illustrate its efficacy in the person of his page, Eudemon, a lad barely twelve years old. In the presence of the whole Court, Eudemon, with his cap in his hand, his hair smoothly brushed, a clear and open countenance, beautiful and ruddy lips, his eyes steady, standing up straight on his feet, and yet full of youthful modesty, asks Gargantua's leave to become one of his household in the style and manner of Cicero. Gargantua, though four times his age, cannot say a word in reply, but "hides his face in his cap and blubbers like a cow." Grandgousier discharges the old teacher, and engages Ponocrates, who is the representative of the Renaissance. The method of Bossuet is exchanged for that of Fénelon.

The sketch which follows is a remarkable proof of Rabelais' enlightened views on education. The old mediæval "trivium" and "quadrivium" is abandoned for the Greek *mousiké* and *gymnastiké*. The mind and the body are to be developed by intellectual and physical exercises; instruction is to be combined with amusement; the pupil is to be taught to observe and note things for himself. Gargantua now rises at four. He takes a bath,

and while he is being rubbed some pages of the New Testament are read to him, and then he says his prayers. He breaks his fast with the lightest possible food, and after he has dressed himself he receives a variety of lessons, followed by three consecutive hours of reading. Then he plays at ball, and, after changing his shirt, goes for a walk and returns to dinner. During the repast he hears some pleasant history of warlike achievements, and talks with his tutor on the nature of the vegetables, fruit, fish, and meat which are served at table. Dinner ended, he washes his eyes and hands in fresh water, and gives thanks to God in praise of His bounty and goodness. The hour for digestion is devoted to music, or to cards, which were made the instruments of arithmetical instruction. Another three hours are then devoted to study. Next follow various bodily exercises. He rides, practises with the lance, hunts, leaps, swims, and enjoys various forms of sport. Once more he takes a bath, rubs himself carefully down, changes his clothes, and returns at a foot's pace through the woods and fields to his house. On the way he and his tutor botanise and collect specimens of different plants. Or he visits the workshops of the different trades, asks the artisans to explain their industries, and never fails to reward them handsomely. Supper follows. It is the fullest meal of the day, and is accompanied by learned conversations and closed by grace. After supper he plays at dice or cards, or on musical instruments,

or visits men of learning, and, above all, distinguished travellers. The day ends with a study of the heavens and a recapitulation of all that has been read, seen, learned, or heard during the day. Finally, when the hour came for repose, the pupil and his master "prayed to God the Creator of all things, falling down before Him, strengthening their faith in Him, glorifying Him for His boundless munificence, giving thanks to Him for the past, and commending themselves to His clemency for the future." And so to bed. Once in each month they made an excursion to some neighbouring village, and spent their time "in the greatest cheer imaginable, sporting, making merry, drinking healths, playing, singing, dancing, tumbling in some fair meadow, unnestling of sparrows, taking of quails, and fishing for frogs and crayfish."

In the contrast which Rabelais draws between these two systems of education he satirises the daily life of the Franciscans. He shows how its fruit is gluttony, dirt, and ignorance. As has been said, he never spares the monks, but attacks them with some of the concentrated bitterness of a renegade. In comparing Friar John's conduct with that of his brethren at the assault upon the vineyard of Seuilly, he illustrates the apathy of the monastic bodies, their want of practical energy, their incapacity to cope with events when action is required. When Picrochole's army pours into the vineyard, the monks knew not which saint

they should invoke. The bell was rung to summon the chapter, and it was decided to hold processional services, chanting the *contra hostium insidias* and repeating the responses *pro pace*.

“Now there was in the monastery a cloister monk named Friar John of the Chopping Knives,<sup>1</sup> young, gallant, nimble, lusty, handy with his weapons, bold, resolute, adventurous, tall, spare, wide-mouthed, long-nosed, quick to rattle off Hours, gabble masses, despatch vigils; in a word, a true monk, if ever there was one since the monking world monked a monkery; and for the rest, a learned clerk—within the covers of his breviary. This monk, so soon as he heard the noise that the enemy made in the vineyard, came out to know what it meant. And when he saw that they were gathering the grapes which were to serve for next year’s wine, back he comes into the choir of the church, where were gathered all the rest of the monks, stark silly with bewilderment, like so many bell-founders, chanting in plain song *impetum inimicorum*. Whereat he cried out, ‘Well sung! well sung! In God’s name, why don’t ye sing “Baskets, good-bye; the vintage is o’er”? Devil take me if there be not rascals in our vineyard cutting the grapes and vines in such fashion that there will not be a single berry for years to come. By the belly of St. James, what shall we poor wretches have to drink in the meantime?’ Then said the Lord Prior, ‘What does this drunken beast here? Away with him

<sup>1</sup> *Frère Jean des Entommeures*, in modern French *des entamures*. Urquhart calls him Friar John of the Funnels, as though the word was *entonnoirs*. The passage which follows is a condensed and free version of the original.

to prison for troubling our divine service.' 'Nay,' said Friar John, 'let us think of our vine service, that that be not troubled; for you, my Lord Prior, love good wine, as does every honest man. Never yet did man of worth dislike good wine; that is a monastic apophthegm. But these responses that you sing here, by God, men, they are not in season. Wherefore is it that our Hours are short at vintage, and in winter long? Brother Macé Pelosse, of blessed memory, true and zealous servant of religion—devil take me if I lie—told me, and I well remember it, that the reason was that we might in this season well press the juice and make the wine, and in the winter swallow it up. Hark ye, my masters: all ye that love good wine, follow me! St. Anthony burn me if the coward shall wet his lips with a drop who will not fight to save the vines!' So saying he threw off his habit, seized the staff of the cross, which was made of the heart of a sorb-apple tree, long as a lance and thick as a man could grasp, and fell upon the enemy, who, without order, ensigns, drums, or trumpets, were gathering the grapes. The standard-bearers had laid their ensigns against the walls; the drummers had knocked out the heads of their drums to fill them with grapes; the trumpets were choked with clusters; all were in disarray. So sudden and furious was his onset that he turned them over like swine; they went down before him like grass before a mower; never was corn so threshed by a ploughman's flail as were they hammered by his merciless staff. There was no escape. One cried to St. James, another to St. George; some died without speaking, others spoke without dying; some died speaking, others spoke dying. Thus by the single-handed prowess and valour of Friar John was destroyed all that army which had entered the

vineyard to the number of thirteen thousand six hundred and twenty-two, besides the women and little children, which are always understood."

Had the monks been deficient in practical energy because of their excess of piety or of study, they might have been pardoned ; but Rabelais will not allow them this excuse. Their bad Latinity is a frequent mark for his satire. "En nôtre abbaye," says Friar John, "nous n'étudions jamais, de peur des auripéaulx" (ear-ache). "Nôtre feu abbé disait que c'est chose monstrueuse de voir un frère savant. *Magis magnos clericos non sunt magis magnos sapientes.* Pour ma part, corps Dieu, je n'étudie jamais." They do nothing to earn their wealth. Why, asks Rabelais, is a monk shunned by all the world? He answers the question in the words of Gargantua:—

"For the same reason that a monkey in a family is always teased and provoked. The monkey does not guard the house like the dog, or draw the plough like the ox ; he yields neither milk nor wool as the sheep ; he carries no burden like the horse. It is the same with the monk. He does not till the soil like the husbandman, defend the country like the soldier, cure the sick like the physician, preach like an evangelical doctor, teach like the schoolmaster, provide necessities for the commonwealth like the merchant. 'But at least,' says the kindly Grandgousier, 'they pray to God for us.' 'Not a bit of it,' returns Gargantua ; 'all that they do is to torment the neighbourhood with the ting-tang jangle of their eternal bells.' 'Right,' cried Friar John, 'a mass, a matin, a



vesper well rung are half said.' 'They mumble out legends,' continues Gargantua, 'and psalms of which they understand nothing; they string together Paternosters and Ave Marias without apprehending the meaning of what they say. I call it mocking God and not praying to Him. If they pray for us, Heaven help us! it is because they fear to lose their victuals and fat messes of pottage.'"

Nor is his attack confined to the gluttony, ignorance, apathy, dirt, and idleness of the monks. He arraigns the whole ecclesiastical fabric from the Pope downwards. In the nether world the magnificence of the Papacy is gauged at its true worth. Julius II cries hot pudding pies; Boniface VIII is a scummer of pots, Nicholas III a paper-maker; Alexander VI, with a sly allusion to the skill of the Borgias in poisons, is a rat-killer. In the fifth book he laughs at the adoration of the Popes, their assumption of the title of God upon earth, the wars which they wage in the name of religion, the decretals upon which their power is based. On the Ringing Island Pantagruel and his companions obtain access with great difficulty to the cage of the Pope-hawk. Panurge looks at him curiously for a while, and then exclaims, "Maudite soit la bête! elle a l'air d'une huppe." On the same island they see an old green-headed bis-hawk snoring in his cage. Panurge takes up a stone to wake him, but Ædituus stays his hand with

"Hold, hold, honest friend! Strike, wound, poison, kill, and murder all the kings and princes

in the world, by treachery or how thou wilt, and as soon as thou likest unnestle the angels from their cock-loft. Pope-hawk will pardon all this. But never be so mad as to meddle with these sacred birds, as thou lovest the profit, welfare, and life not only of thyself but of thy friends and relations, alive or dead, or to be born for a thousand generations to come. For so long 'wouldest thou entail misery upon them."

Nor is it only the abuses of the monastic system or the flaws in the ecclesiastical fabric that Rabelais attacks. He does not spare the religious practices. For instance, he strongly condemns pilgrimages. In the war between Picrochole and Grandgousier six poor pilgrims are caught between the hostile armies, and are brought before Grandgousier. They have visited the shrine of St. Sebastian, near Nantes, to pray him to save them from the plague.

" ' Ah, poor men ! ' said Grandgousier, ' do you indeed think that St. Sebastian verily sends the plague ? ' ' Yes, surely, ' answered one, ' for so our preachers tell us. ' ' And can it be so ? ' cried Grandgousier. ' Do the false prophets teach you such abuses ? Do they so blaspheme the saints and holy men of God as to liken them unto the devils, who work nothing but evil unto mankind ? Truly I greatly marvel that your king should suffer such scandalous doctrines to be preached. But go your ways, poor men, in the name of God the Creator, to whom I pray for you, that He will guide you perpetually, that ye be not henceforward so ready to undertake these idle and profitless journeys. Look to your families ; labour

every man diligently in his vocation ; instruct your children ; live as the good apostle St. Paul directs you. In so doing God, His angels, and His saints will guard and shield you, so that no plague or evil can at any time come nigh you.”

Rabelais has endeavoured to show what wretched dens of ignorance and inactivity monasteries sometimes were. He proceeds to frame his own ideal institution, in which men and women may pursue religion, virtue, truth, and science. The Abbey of Thélème deserves special notice, because the gross parodies of Crazy Hall and Medmenham Abbey have defamed the memory of the institution and its founder.

Friar John's services in the war against Picrochole required to be rewarded. He is offered the Abbey of Seuilly ; he might have been Abbot of Bourgueil or St. Florent, or both. But he refuses all. “How,” he asks, “shall I govern others, that cannot govern myself?” So he is allowed to create his own “As you like it,” to institute an order “à son devis,” to found his own Abbey of Thélème. By the side of the Loire he rears a stately abbey, a thousand times more splendid than Bonnavet or Chambord. Yet no walls enclose it in ; no chapel localises its worship. Bells were the monastic conscience ; they regulated the life of the monk, and proclaimed his death. But here no clocks or dials or bells tell the passage of time. The day, like the thoughts or the money of the inmates, was their own. Like Fontevrault,

Thélème was a *duplex monasterium*. Half the building was allotted to the men, half to the women. Only fair high-born ladies of sweet disposition, only gay, comely youths of gentle condition were permitted to dwell therein. Idlers, flatterers, bigots, hypocrites, law practitioners, usurers, fomenters of dissension were shut out. The age at which the inmates entered is fixed, but no period is laid down for leaving. Youths entered the abbey between twelve and eighteen, maidens from ten to fifteen. They might spend their lives within Thélème; but if they wished to leave they were permitted to depart, taking with them their money and the lady of their choice. They took no perpetual vows of chastity, obedience, or poverty, but were free, wealthy, and at liberty to marry.

To each of the inmates is assigned a private oratory. There is no church for an official worship; there are no churches for different creeds. Religion is what each person chooses to make it; times of prayer are not prescribed. Harmoniously dressed in rich, bright-coloured liveries of damasks, satins, or velvets, which are changed from day to day at the will of the ladies, men and women study in the great libraries Hebrew and Greek, Latin, Spanish, and Italian; in their hours of recreation they paint, sing, play, compose verses, and act comedies, or sit in the fair pleasure-gardens with their mazes and flowering fruit-trees which fringe the river Loire, or join, each gallant under the

eyes of the lady whose knight he is, in the games and sports of the tennis-court, the lists, the race-course, and the chase. Their lives are controlled by no laws, statutes or regulations ; they eat and drink, sleep and work, according to their own good pleasure. Yet no hour of the day is wasted ; all are occupied in training the body and the mind, in developing all the faculties, physical as well as mental. The rule of the order is summed up in "Fay ce que voudras." There is no need of any other, for honour prompts to virtue and forbids vice. Man is at heart naturally inclined not to evil, but to good ; it is only restraint which creates his desire for what is forbidden. The description closes with a prophecy discovered when the foundations of the abbey were dug. It is a cry of hope, a *sursum corda*,

"Pauvres humains qui bon heur attendez,  
Levez vos cueurs et mes dits entendez."

And then, in obscure and cautiously veiled language, Rabelais foretells the final triumph of divine truth, science, and philosophy, which shall emerge from the bloody conflict of Catholics and Protestants.

The audacity of Rabelais' satire upon the Church is the more remarkable because he was at no pains to secure an ally by playing upon the superstitions or flattering the follies of kings. At a time when rulers obeyed the predictions of a Ruggieri or a Nostradamus, he ridiculed the

false science of astrology, and claimed that the stars were no respecters of persons. At a time when a Francis I sate on the throne, he did not hesitate to administer bold and honest rebukes to the warlike follies of kings. “Ces diables de rois ne sont que veaux et ne savent ni ne valent rien sinon à faire des maux es pauvres sujets et à troubler tout le monde par guerre pour leur inique et détestable plaisir.” He denounces the inhumanity of mediæval war. “Væ victis” is not upon his lips; his ideal ruler does not seize the kingdom of his rival, or detain his son as a hostage, or harry his dominions. He dislikes every kind of warlike conquest. Yet if a country is to be annexed, it must be humoured like a child, tended as a sick person, fostered like newly-planted trees. Such conduct is the duty of kings, and the only course which is truly royal is to do good and to eschew evil. These sentiments were not then the commonplaces they now are. During the sixteenth century, in the heat of the rivalry between Francis I and Charles V, their utterance was bold. Rabelais’ picture of Picrochole’s council of war and that ruler’s hot-headed dreams of universal conquest has coupled his imaginary monarch with Pyrrhus and La Laitière in La Fontaine’s immortal verse. In a future life warlike heroes will receive their deserts. In Hades Hector serves as a scullion; Xerxes sells mustard; Alexander the Great is a patcher of old breeches and boots; Hannibal mends kettles; Camillus

makes wooden shoes. Meanwhile an Epictetus sits attired in the French fashion, under a pleasant arbour, with a bright company of merry maidens. Rabelais' horror of war nerves him to contrast weak-minded sovereigns, puffed up by the flattery of greedy courtiers and infatuated by lust of conquest, with peaceful God-fearing monarchs who have before them the good of their subjects, whose creatures they acknowledge themselves to be. He does not bow with the courtly adulation of an official preacher, with the phrase upon his lips, "Sire, we are almost all mortal!" But at a time when France was bleeding to death from the devastating campaigns of Francis I, he honestly exposes the follies of dreams of conquest, paints the horrors which wars entail upon the poor, and opposes to the vainglorious fury of a Picrochole the Homeric grandeur of a Grandgousier, who knows that the best crown of a king is the love of his subjects.

As a satirist Rabelais is, in fact, the lineal descendant of the Gaul who plucked the beard of the Roman senator as he sat on his curule chair. He is totally without veneration. Yet whatever is really great and good he passes by as unfit for his purpose, and he is very far from being a destructive sceptic like Lucian. All that is bombastic, false, cowardly, or mischievous he detects, under whatever disguises it may be concealed, strips off its tinsel decoration, and holds it up for ridicule in his picturesque and vigorous prose. As a humorist

his method is unlike that of his countrymen. He does not deal in hints or allusions; his banter is rather rustic than courtly; it is plain-spoken and detailed, not light or delicate. One feature of his humour is now more common than when the exactitude of his calculations and the particularity of his descriptions first produced their effect; his meanest messengers have names, parents, and habitations. Nor does Rabelais more closely resemble the humorists of other countries. He does not champion the past like Aristophanes, and he has not a trace of the Greek dramatist's clear-cut grace and precision; he is without Cervantes' melancholy or Swift's contempt for fellow-men; he is not a psychologist like Sterne. His humour is not more closely akin to the dry exaggeration of the American or the "pawky" shrewdness of the Scotchman, than it is to the sly innuendo of his own fellow-countryman. But its charm lies in its complete abandonment, the headlong outpouring of everything that enters his mind, the vigour of his assimilating power, the resistless play of his exuberant fancy. Although his touch is heavy and his fun is worked out with a detail which is often excessive in its elaboration, yet his faculties seem to run their own course, and his discursiveness owes its humorous efficacy to the complexity of the associations and suggestions which his gift of combination enables him to string upon a single thread. The process of connection is never, in appearance at least, laborious; his mind seems to work in-



stinctively, impelled by an unfailing buoyant gaiety. His humour is the Pythic fervour of the poet working in the field of extravagant drollery. He pours out his absurdities with a lordly disregard of decorum and with the mock solemnity of intoxication ; and he holds himself at perfect liberty to skip, dilate, digress, halt, or hurry when and where his caprice pleases. Side by side with his unbridled zanyism are piled up, like Pelion upon Ossa, in most ridiculous contrast, prodigious masses of learning. Rabelais has hardly a literary predecessor whom he does not parody or imitate. Greek and Roman poets and historians, monastic chroniclers, theologians, civilians,—all are rifled, and their possessions thrown into the seething cauldron of his wit. Thence they emerge not in an undigested mass, but classified, arranged, and marshalled for each particular purpose. Nor does Rabelais accept with the omnivorous appetite of a mere devourer of books all the crude theories promulgated by the ancients, but he applies the processes of the critic to the narratives. The abundance of illustration would be pedantic if it were not for the ease with which the learning is borne and for the ludicrous incongruity of the associations. Scraps of varied knowledge, particles of monastic lore, fragments of science, shreds of legal learning, morsels of history, sacred or profane, are poured forth and swept along on the broad brimming tide of his humour, jumbled up with quaint conceits, rude horseplay, popular proverbs,

contemporary allusions, and local idioms. The result is a kaleidoscopic compound of the most recondite knowledge with the broadest buffoonery, grand ideas with puerile plays upon words, vinous drivel with profound allegory, stupendous grossness with high purpose both religious and moral.

Rabelais' power of exciting a laugh is strong and masculine. He does not extort a smile by sly malice or neatly turned innuendo, but raises a hearty laugh by a broad humour which is often regarded as his distinctive gift. His narrative power and dramatic genius are equally striking. Space does not allow any illustrations of the former. Of the latter it may be truly said that nothing can exceed the vivid force and distinctness with which Rabelais makes his readers picture the characters of his fiction. Many of the minor portraits are hit off with bold, telling strokes; in perfect keeping are the conduct and language of the scholastic orator, the decretalist, or the Pyrrhonist philosopher. Sometimes indeed, as in the case of Grandgousier or Gargantua, the human traits are lost in the gigantic proportions which lift the actors out of the world of mortals into the fantastic regions of mediæval romance. But Rabelais' dramatic and creative faculties find their fullest scope in the characters of Pantagruel, Panurge, and Friar John; it is in their figures that he most conspicuously displays his keenness of observation and profound knowledge of human nature.

Pantagruel is "l'idée et l'exemplaire de toute joyeuse perfection." To the calm, wise figure of his ideal king Rabelais opposes the pedantry of scholars, the ignorance of monks, the charlatanism of sophists, alchemists and astrologers, the chicanery of lawyers, the hairsplittings of theologians, the profitless dialectics of logicians, the worldly ambition of ecclesiastics. In greater detail he contrasts the poetry of his character with the prose of his companions,—with the gross animalism of Friar John or the soulless learning of a shifty adventurer like Panurge. Possessed of a rare combination of learning, common-sense, and energy, a worthy pupil of Eusthenes and Epistemon, wise, good, modest, dreamy, and speculating on the mysteries of life with something of a Hamlet's melancholy, Pantagruel stands aloof from his two companions like a spectator. Considerate to their weaknesses, he seems to descend among their adventures like a superior being from another sphere.

Between Friar John and Panurge the contrast is sharp and many-sided. Friar John personifies the animal good, Panurge the natural evil, that are inherent in humanity. The former is the embodiment of rude health and physical enjoyment. He is a lusty, fearless, jovial comrade, transparently honest, and with all his coarseness often surprising us with an unexpected delicacy of feeling, always ready with his knife for a joint or his hanger for a foe; a fighting, swearing Friar Tuck, the deepest drinker in any company, a

second Samson in demolishing his enemies single-handed. Ramping through the world like a bull, he is devoid of religious sentiment, and though he lards his speech with imperfect sentences from his breviary he is the most ignorant of monks. He is a man of vigorous, energetic temperament, by nature destined for a soldier, by profession forced to lead an uncongenial life of contemplation.

Panurge is a more complicated character. He is more philosophical than Falstaff, though his connection with Pantagruel suggests a comparison with the witty companion of Prince Hal. Nor, again, does he resemble the shrewd peasant Sancho Panza, though at first sight the similarity of the relationship between the ideal Don Quixote and his realistic servant is close. Panurge combines the mischievous ingenuity of a Paris *gamin* with the wrinkled experience of a man of fifty; but he is rather a Puck than a Mephistopheles, and it may be doubted whether the latter personage could be conceived by a Frenchman. His reckless gaiety and his keen wit cover a multitude of sins. Furtive, witty, unprincipled, a spendthrift, a rake, and a coward, he has abandoned passion for cynicism, and exchanged love for libertinism. Ready and resourceful, without conscience, shame, or virtue, he is a railer at God and the Church, yet intensely superstitious in moments of peril, a strenuous upholder of orthodoxy, a bitter foe to the heresy of Raminagrobis. A Villon in his Bohemian licence, an Amyot in his wealth of

learning, a Figaro in his gaiety, a Gil Blas in his knowledge of the world, a Duc de Richelieu in his dissolute effrontery, despising ideals or elevated sentiment, he is a type of those witty, adroit, unprincipled, self-seeking, pleasure-loving reprobates of whom French history and French fiction afford numerous examples.

Round these central figures, together with those of Grandgousier and Gargantua, Rabelais has painted his strange panorama of sixteenth-century life. The elaboration of the three principal characters would alone show that there was far more than mere burlesque in "Pantagruel." What, then, is the relation which the *Homère bouffon* bears to the intellectual movements of the sixteenth century, a period which in the antagonism of faith and culture so closely resembles the present age? The magic word which sums up the Rabelaisian philosophy is "Drink." How are we to interpret the sibylline oracle of the Holy Bottle?

Rabelais' character and opinions as they are revealed in his writings forbid us to suppose that he means only to teach the old lesson, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," though it is characteristic of his manner that that interpretation is left open to the reader. He is not a scoffing, creedless preacher of sensualism. Possibly he may have drifted far from the moorings of the ancient creed; but even of this there is no evidence. He nowhere speaks with irreverence of Christianity, and there is nothing to show that he had left its

pale or rejected any of its principles. He assails the discipline rather than the doctrines of the Roman Church; he attacks the ignorance and idleness of the monastic orders, the false miracles and relics, the purchase of absolution, the sale of indulgences, the power and ambition of the Papacy; but he is no advocate for doctrinal revolution. When Pantagruel weeps for the death of the great God Pan, whom he understands to be the "great Saviour of the faithful, who was put to death at Jerusalem," we seem to see the spirit of the Renaissance shedding a regretful tear over the beauty of universal faith. Rabelais is a believer in the immortality of the soul, though the form in which he casts his creed is rather that of Goethe than of the Church. "'Je crois,' dit Pantagruel, 'que toutes âmes intellectives sont exemptes des ciseaux d'Atropos.'" Numerous passages illustrate his faith in the existence of a God, and his definition was borrowed by Pascal. "May that intellectual sphere," says the priestess of the Bottle, "whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere, which we call God, keep you in His almighty protection!" It is in this connection remarkable that Rabelais does not, like the majority of the humanists, throw in his lot unreservedly with the Platonists, but continues a disciple of the Aristotelian philosophy. On this side he inclined rather to mediæval scholasticism than to the thought of the Renaissance.

Culture was Rabelais' passion, ignorance his detestation. But he does not sever the development of the intellect from interest in practical life or from the growth of religion. Drink deep at the fount of learning; drain to the dregs, if you can, the Holy Bottle of science; strive, body and spirit together, to hold intercourse with all that is divine. Scholastic disputations, dogmatic definitions, legal pedantries, false sciences are only masks assumed by ignorance and fetters imposed upon the human mind by fashion. Life, in its fullest and widest sense, consists neither in monastic seclusion from the world, nor in the extravagant mortifications of Catholics, nor in the intolerant austerities of Protestants; it is not the easy-going apathy of a Grandgousier nor the simple, instinctive greatness of a noble but imperfectly educated savage like Gargantua; it is not the natural animalism of a healthy Philistine like Friar John; still less is it the cynical, unsympathetic, unspiritual culture of a Panurge. Churchmen had starved the intellect or mortified the body, that so they might increase the ecstasy of the spirit; they had anticipated the grave by a voluntary death in life and a complete renunciation of the world. The men of the Renaissance fed the animal soul with the newly discovered wonders of the mind, or with the beauties of artistic culture; but they destroyed the spiritual soul, because they left the body plunged in refined debauchery. Both had greatly erred. Neither the extinction nor the

idealisation of the body satisfies the highest conceptions of humanity.

Drink deeply, says the oracle of the Holy Bottle, at the spring of science and of learning, for all the abuses of society are the monstrous brood of ignorance ; seize not on one or the other side of man's dual being, but cultivate the whole of humanity, and not this or that part. Let spirit and body pursue the same end in unison ; exercise all the faculties at once, spiritual as well as animal, immaterial as well as sensual ; labour to attain the true wisdom, but disdain not to pluck the flowers of enjoyment that bloom by the way. Accept life cheerfully, not sadly. Draw from the senses whatever of pleasure they have to offer ; kindle the mind with all that the heart possesses of passion and of enthusiasm ; but permit not the spirit to be overwhelmed by that which is its vehicle ; suffer not the soul to be degraded by the mere gratification of sensual appetites, or chilled by the exclusive culture of the intellect, or stunted by withdrawal from the practical affairs of men. Refuse not the wisdom of antiquity, but pay it no extravagant reverence, lest the learning of the ancients become a burden rather than an aid. Use it as the foundation on which to build, each one for himself raising his own edifice, independently and unhampered by his predecessors. Culture alone will quicken the mental vision, so that men may see by what mists of ignorance they are blinded. Till culture is spread abroad univer-



sally, the leisured, refined *ataraxia* of the Abbey of Thélème must necessarily remain a vain, impossible dream. And, meanwhile, what is the true Pantagruelian philosophy? Acquiesce in the present, says Rabelais, so far as it is unalterable; pay no heed to the contest between the bigots of Rome and Geneva, for their strife is as meaningless as the bells of the Ringing Island, as void of living warmth as the frozen words that fell on the deck of Pantagruel's ship. Drink ever at the fount of science; strive to the utmost to help forward the cause of progress by spreading abroad learning and culture; and preserve "une certaine gaieté d'esprit confite en mespris des choses fortuites," for the true Pantagruelian philosopher ever maintains "a spirit of jollity pickled in scorn of fortune."

Rabelais will always retain the fresh interest which he derives from his intellectual connection, through the Renaissance and the Reformation, with the French Revolution. Of that momentous movement he is the earliest harbinger. His doctrine of human liberty was not far removed from the theory of return to Nature, seeing that both were based on enthusiasm for the natural goodness of humanity. But Rabelais not only supplied his countrymen with great dynamic ideas; he also gave them the forms in which they might be expressed. His services to the French vernacular tongue are so incalculably great that they cannot here be wholly ignored. When he began

to write, the grammar of his native tongue was in complete confusion; verbs were conjugated differently according to the custom of each province; words were disguised beyond detection by the fashion of the day, the caprice of individual writers, or the lawlessness of dialects; spelling and pronunciation were entirely divorced. Before the powers and proper use of the letters or the original roots of the language could be ascertained, it was necessary to study the *patois*. It was in this respect especially that Rabelais was the predecessor of the great French grammarians, a pioneer of discovery in fields where Ramus and the Estiennes subsequently laboured. But it was not in grammar that Rabelais did his most useful work. When he began to write, French prose was in construction ungrammatical, in style involved, slow-moving and heavy, in command of words meagre and poverty-stricken. Bringing to bear upon his style a mind trained in the niceties of the classics, he gave his prose epigrammatic neatness and supple flexibility, secured simple and logical forms for his constructions, studied the balance of his phrases, added point and energy to his sentences.

Above all, Rabelais enriched the language and increased its amplitude of resource. Collectively, French dialects were wealthy, individually they were poor. There was no vernacular official language, for Latin was the language of the Church and the law-courts. Each group within the *langue d'oïl* and the *langue d'oc* was infinitely divided, so that

speech varied as you passed from province to province, village to village, and even from one part of a city to another. Travelling, as Rabelais did, from one end of France to the other, everywhere registering the sayings of the fields, the streets, the markets and the taverns, he was peculiarly qualified to effect the requisite work of accumulation. Not only did he seek new creations in coinages from Greek, Latin and Italian, but he gathered together all the original resources of the different dialects. He saw that the best mode of reviving the strength of the language was to bring back into use the picturesque phrases and lively idioms of the provinces, to restore the almost obsolete words on which the popular imagination had stamped its energetic impress. Here is an oath from Lorraine, here an affirmation from Champagne, here a salute from the shores of the Mediterranean, here an interrogative from Provence, here a descriptive epithet from Normandy. But naturally he is peculiarly rich in the *patois* of the centre, and especially of Touraine, Anjou, and Poitou. If space permitted, a curious collection of words might be compiled from "Pantagruel" which may still be heard in the "Garden of France." Nothing escaped his far-reaching net. Every word that was coined in the *esprit gaulois* to discriminate nice shades of character, to satirise, ridicule, or banter, Rabelais has saved from loss and preserved for future use. It is not the least of his claims to the gratitude of his countrymen—

and it is one which will be most universally conceded—that he so enriched and amplified the literary resources of his native tongue that the civilised world is content to be the debtor of France.

## FONTAINEBLEAU

NO public building in France appeals to the historical imagination more eloquently than the Palace of Fontainebleau. None awakens so rich and varied a group of striking associations ; none is so thickly haunted with memories of the past ; none is tenanted by the ghosts of so brilliant a crowd of famous men and women. It is a document to which twenty kings have set their sign-manuals, a chronicle in stone of the history of France, a dumb yet eloquent preacher of the mutability of human greatness.

Successive sovereigns from 1137 to 1870—from Louis le Gros to Napoleon III—have enriched it with memorials of their rule. Within its precincts, by ancient custom, the royal wives of monarchs have brought into the world the heirs to the throne. Upon its buildings the uncrowned queens of France—from Diane de Poitiers to Madame de Pompadour—have lavished their luxury, their caprice, and their extravagance. The ermine of Anne of Bretagne, the porcupine of Louis XII, the pierced swan of Claude of Lorraine, which are so conspicuous on the walls and ceilings of Blois, are absent from Fontainebleau. But, beginning

with the salamander of Francis I, there is scarcely a king, a queen, or a mistress whose memory is not preserved in the buildings of the palace. Here is the monogram of Henry II, so constructed that it may be read as that of himself and Catherine de Medicis or Diane de Poitiers; here are Diane's crescent moons, her stags, her leverets, her bows and arrows; here is the S and arrow, which commemorates *la belle Gabrielle* with a pun upon her surname of Estrées, and by its side is the monogram of her royal lover, Henry IV, and his wife, Marie de Medicis. Here, again and again repeated, are the lilies of France, the balls of the Medicis, the famous "girony of eight" of Navarre. Here, also, are the monograms of Louis XIII and Anne of Austria, of Louis XIV and Maria Theresa, of Louis XV, and of Marie Antoinette. Here, finally, is the imperial bee of Napoleon I.

In the course of centuries the rude hunting-lodge of early kings, the donjon-keep which stood in the centre of the *chers déserts* of St. Louis, was transformed into an enchanted palace, surpassing in its beauty the fabled abode of Morgana, which became in turn the *Chez Soy* of Francis I, the *belle et délicieuse résidence* of Anne of Austria, the *demeure des siècles* of Napoleon I. During the passage of years it has been the favourite home of kings and queens, the birthplace of princes, the refuge of exiled sovereigns, the prison of a Pope and a king of Spain, the bower of royal lovers, the scene of the triumphs and defeats which constitute

the glory and the pathos of French history, the stage on which the actors in its brilliant comedies or ghastly tragedies have played their striking parts.

Nor is Fontainebleau content to record only the rise and fall of dynasties. Its interest is not exclusively historical. It is artistic also. Seven centuries of changing taste have left their mark upon its walls. It is a mosaic of stone and colours, into which are dovetailed the various stages in the history and progress of French art. Upon its walls some of the greatest of French architects, sculptors, and painters have inscribed their genius. From Fontainebleau emanated the first great artistic movement in France. It would be unjust to ignore the early efforts of Louis XII and his minister, Cardinal Georges d'Amboise, or to depreciate the native genius displayed in the Château of Blois. But the impulse given to art by the brilliant group of Italian artists which Francis I gathered round him at Fontainebleau—by Rosso, Primaticcio, Niccolo dell' Abbate, and many others—was as great as it was indisputably general. From the École de Fontainebleau Claude Lorraine derived his magical light, and Poussin drew his tragic note. And from the sixteenth century onwards, each successive step in the glory or the decadence of French painting, architecture, or sculpture, is chronicled in the buildings or the decoration of the palace. Their records carry us from the Italian Renaissance of Francis I, in

which, in the first flush of their inspiration, the newly imported classic elements conquered the Gothic forms of native growth, to the pure classicism of Henry II ; from the bastard Renaissance of Henry IV to the flowing lines and wealth of colour by which the artists of Louis XIII departed from the antique model ; from the pompous emphasis of Louis XIV to the charming but capricious grace of Louis XV ; from the classic art of the Empire to the Gothic Revival of the Restoration.

Historically and artistically, Fontainebleau is the jewel of French palaces. And the brilliance of the gem is enhanced by the unrivalled beauty of the setting. The frame is worthy of the picture. In its diversity the forest stands alone among the forests of France. Every variety of tree—poplars and chestnuts, maple and birch, oaks and junipers—flourishes in abundance. The wild and savage scenery of Salvator Rosa alternates with the calm and peaceful landscape of Claude Lorraine. Stonehenges and Karnacs of moss-covered rock, rich-coloured *platières*, or ridges of sandstone, bare, naked, boldly outlined hills, present abrupt contrasts with tree-clad slopes, tranquil plains, quiet pools, like the *Mare aux fées*, or the *Mare aux serpents*, and turfy sweeps, such as that near the woods of Bas Bréaux, where Pan himself might be content to shepherd his flocks. Here are masses of curiously scaled grey stone, resembling primeval lizard-like monsters, petrified as they approached



their prey ; while, above and around them, twisting, writhing, and contorting into fantastic shapes, rises a forest growth of junipers, which look like the wild figures of a corybantic dance. Here, too, are “secular” oaks—“green-robed senators of the woods”—whose forms may well have sheltered Charlemagne, as popular tradition asserts, or concealed the dark spectral form of the “Grand Veneur,” or shaded the velvet cheek of Diane de Poitiers. And, dotted here and there among the trees, gleam the white tents of the soldiers, who make of the forest a camp of exercise, and whose blue and red uniforms, cooking fires, and picketed horses give life and colour to its sombre depths.

As the first great movement of French art emanated from the palace, so the last great movement has found its source in the forest, which has inspired the genius of Millet, Rousseau, Diaz, Corot, and the modern Barbizon School of French painters. The simple poetry of natural life is the discovery and the revelation of its founders. It was not the shy grace of a Dryad, nor the spiritual ecstasy of a Madonna, nor the smile of a Bacchante, which was their inspiration, but the mystery of the woods, the savage gloom of a forest, the rude pathos of humble toil. It was in the forest that Corot brought to perfection his art of arresting the momentary changes of nature, and of blending the green of leaves and grass with the grey of his fleecy clouds ; here, too, Rousseau acquired his emotional apprehension of landscape, and Diaz

bestowed on the glades of sylvan scenery the glow of colour in which his Spanish instinct delighted. And, above all, it was on the outskirts of the forest that the Homer of rural life—but a Homer in *patois*—caught, and fixed upon his canvas, the cadenced, rhythmic movement of the sower and the painful, laboured effort of the overladen wood-cutter, or translated into form and colours the terrible page in which La Bruyère describes the hopeless uneventful toil of the French peasant, or revived the pious sensations of his own Norman childhood, when, at declining day, the peasants raise themselves erect from their toil to repeat the *Angelus Domini nuntiavit Mariæ*.

Fontainebleau sums up in itself the history of the French nation and of French art. It will be possible in the following pages to indicate only a few of the associations which the forest and the palace suggest. The palace owes its existence to the forest. Official exigencies of State dictated the selection of the Louvre, St. Cloud, Versailles, the Tuileries, Vincennes, or St. Germain, as residences of French sovereigns. Chinon, the Windsor of Touraine, which crowns the line of cliffs that rise above the Vienne, was a stronghold that defied the English invader. Bourges afforded a refuge to the *roitelet* from his powerful rival, the king of England. Blois and Amboise and Angers were strongholds that commanded the passages of the Loire. But Fontainebleau was emphatically a hunting lodge.

The ancient province of the Gâtinais (*Pagus Wastinensis*) on the left bank of the Seine was united to the French crown by Philip I in 1068. Within its limits was situated the ancient forest of Bieria,<sup>1</sup> which had become proverbial in the Middle Ages for the size and beauty of its trees. In the "Roman de la Rose" a hero bears a lance, the handle of which, cut in the forest of Thuerie, was so strong that

"Il n'en croît nulle telle en Bière."

The whole country took the name of Bière, and the word still survives in official documents and in the local nomenclature of the Department of Seine-et-Marne. But the name of the more modern palace was gradually extended to the forest, and entirely superseded its ancient title.

Before the year 1068 it would be vain to seek for any mention of the palace of Fontainebleau. Between that date and 1137 the first royal residence was built. In the latter year occurs the first record of the palace, though that record in itself affords a proof of its anterior existence. A charter of Louis VII is extant which closes with this protocol in Latin: "Given at Fontaine-Bléaud, in public, in the year 1137, the first of our reign, there being present in our palace those whose names and signatures are subscribed below." The charter, which confirms the foundation of the

<sup>1</sup> In Low Latin, *Bieria*, or *Bierria*, means a plain; hence the *Bieria Sylva* means the forest of the plain.

Abbey of Val-Sainte-Marie in Auvergne, is said to be *actum apud fontem Bleaudi*. The *fons Bleaudi* became Fontainebleau. But the origin of the term is lost in the mists of antiquity. Ancient antiquaries, delighting in that guess-work which threw discredit on their learning, exercised their ingenuity in explanations. Some invented an eponymous hero; others argued that the word commemorated the sagacity of the dog "Blaut" which discovered the spring; others traced the name to the clearness of the water, which made a French Calirrhœe of the "Fontaine-belle-eau." All that can be said with certainty is that the etymology of the word is the *Fontem Blialdi*, and its meaning "the spring of the mantle"; but the attempt to trace the derivation of the title must be abandoned to the imagination.<sup>1</sup>

There existed, then, at Fontainebleau, in the first year of the reign of Louis VII, a royal palace, which was capable of holding the king and all the great officers of his court, and which was, with certainty, built at least as early as the time of his predecessor, Louis VI, called "the Fat." Nothing more unlike the modern palace can be imagined than this mediæval donjon. Those who are familiar with the house of Jacques Cœur at

<sup>1</sup> The word "Blialdus," "Blandus," "Bliaudus," and other analogous forms, is frequently met with in Low Latin documents. Du Cange gives its meaning as *vestis species*, and illustrates its use in Old French from the mediæval romances—*e.g.* "De mult riche bliaut fut la dame parée," "bliaut de samis," "bliaut de fourrure."

Bourges know how, three centuries later, defensive strength was still at least as much the aim of builders as comfort or splendour; on the inner side a palace, it is on the outer side a fortification. Fontainebleau in the days of Louis VII was a fortified castle, a gloomy keep occupying the site of the present "Cour Ovale," flanked by towers, protected by lofty walls, strengthened by a moat, and approached by a drawbridge. Few traces remain of the early fortress, but the existing buildings were erected on its foundations, and its form is preserved in the irregular shape of the courtyard. Within the baily of the fortress stood the chapel of St. Saturnin, bishop and martyr of Toulouse, finished, as the inscription in the subterranean crypt states, by Louis VII in 1169. Thus the feudal stronghold of the Cour Ovale formed the nucleus round which gathered, at different epochs, the present magnificent and heterogeneous structure. Any one who passes from part to part of the great building, and asks himself "What happened here?" "What king built this or that portion of the palace?" "What effect did his life or death produce upon France?" will gain a truer and more vivid knowledge of the history of the country than can be derived from the reading of many books.

It was to Fontainebleau that Philip Augustus came from the Crusades; here he spent the intervals of the war which he waged against Richard Cœur-de-Lion. Here, in 1191, he celebrated Christmas in

the company of a brilliant throng of nobles with splendid festivities, before he offered thanks for his return at the shrine of the *bienheureux* St. Denis. Here, six years later, he signed a charter which conveyed the hermitage of Franchard to the monastery of St. Euverte of Orleans. The site of the lonely cave, hollowed in the rock, its floor worn by the knees of the hermits, who lived a life of prayer, surrounded by fierce beasts of prey or still more savage human beings, is now a *café* thronged with pleasure-seekers. The contrast between a feudal donjon of Louis VII and the palace of Fontainebleau as it exists to-day sums up the history of France. The advice of Adolphe Joanne to the modern tourist, compared with the counsel of Abbot Stephen to the solitary recluse of Franchard, epitomises, as it were, another aspect of the passage of time from the twelfth to the twentieth century. Listen to the words which the abbot of St. Geneviève of Paris addressed to William de Bierria, who had left the religious house of St. Euverte of Orleans to occupy the newly founded cell in the forest of Bière or Fontainebleau.

“Weep for thyself; weep for thy neighbour; weep also for the Lord. Weep for thyself, reviewing thy past years in bitterness of spirit. Weep for thy neighbour, that is for all who live or are dead in the faith of Christ. Weep also for the Lord, being weary of this present life, and desiring that which is eternal. Let thy first tear be shed, that God may remember no more against thee

the wilful, or unwitting, sins of thy youth ; thy second, that the living may eschew evil and persevere in good works, and that the dead may rest in peace ; thy third, that thou mayest shortly be rid of the body of this death, and be with Christ, crying, ‘ Alas, that my sojourn here is so long ! ’ Let thy first tear, my brother, be a tear of penitence and contrition ; thy second a tear of compassion and pity ; thy third a tear of faith and thanksgiving.

“ From prayer turn then to reading, and from reading to meditation, that so thou mayest mark, learn, and inwardly digest what thou hast read, and store it in the garner of thy memory. But take heed lest, by overmuch reading, thine eyes be dimmed, or thy brain be made to reel. Be moderate in thy reading, and afterwards neglect not to walk to and fro in thy cell, or to go forth into thy garden and rest thy failing eyes by the sight of the green herbs that grow therein—few and scanty though they be—or by the contemplation of thy beehives, that so the bees may be to thee for an ensample and a consolation. Among such diversities of occupation, thou shalt regard the roughness of the desert as the foretaste of the joys of heaven.”

As the centuries advance, Fontainebleau is brought more and more closely into direct contact with the general stream of French history. Especially is it associated with the glories of St. Louis, of Francis I, of Henry IV, and Napoleon I. Four of the greatest of French monarchs made Fontainebleau their favourite residence, and lavished their treasures upon its walls

Fontainebleau was the centre of the *chers déserts* of St. Louis, endeared to him not only by the pleasures of the chase, but by the memory of his mother, Blanche of Castille, who passed much of her time in the neighbourhood. On the banks of the Loing, by the road to Nemours, are still to be seen the vast ruins of her favourite Castle of Grez. Her son shared his mother's love for the forest. St. Louis was the first great builder at Fontainebleau. Under the shadow of the donjon keep, he built the pavilion which still stands, and is still called by his name. Hunting was his favourite pastime. It was probably no accident that the first didactic work on venery was composed in his reign—the “Book of King Modus and Queen Racio.” He was not always so absorbed in crusading enterprises, or in dreams of heavenly beauty, as to neglect the delights of the chase. Among the treasures which he brought back from the East were the grey dogs of Tartar race that he introduced into the forest. A more lasting monument of his passion for hunting still survives. Near the village of Bois-le-Roi rises a little hill, the summit of which is crowned by the ruins of the hermitage of St. Louis. The king was separated from his attendants in the ardour of his pursuit of a stag, when he was suddenly attacked by robbers. He blew his horn for assistance, but none came. He was at his last gasp, when his courtiers rode up. In gratitude for his escape he founded a hermitage, and dedi-





cated it to St. Vincent, on whose day (January 22) he was thus rescued from danger.

Many scenes in the life of St. Louis are associated with Fontainebleau. It was here that, in 1228, he confirmed the privileges of the University of Paris. Here, too, in 1259, believing himself to be at the point of death, he called his son to his bedside, and delivered to him one of those exhortations which Bossuet calls the sacred heirlooms of the children of St. Louis. "Son," said he, "I pray thee to make thyself beloved by the people of thy realm. For, verily, I had rather that a Scot should come out of Scotland, and rule the kingdom well and loyally, than that thou shouldest rule it ill and to evil report." The king was restored to health, and, in gratitude for his recovery, founded a hospital by the side of the castle, and within its walls, for the sick of the neighbouring country. He entrusted it to the care of the brethren of the Order of the Holy Trinity, commonly called Mathurins. For a time he gave to the brethren the existing chapel of St. Saturnin,<sup>1</sup> but afterwards built for their special use the chapel of the Holy Trinity, on the site of which the present chapel is founded. Thus, side by side, Church and State existed

<sup>1</sup> On the ruins of this subterranean chapel Francis I built the present Chapel of St. Saturnin, which is raised to the level of the ground. The older edifice, part of which belongs to the twelfth century, and is said to have been consecrated by Archbishop Becket, remains as a crypt.



within the same walls. In architecture, as well as in politics, the union has produced strange irregularities, which are exemplified, not only in the Cour Ovale at Fontainebleau, but in the Escorial of Spain, the Mafra of Portugal, the Superga of Sardinia.

Joinville records the words of St. Louis to his son. The same chronicler relates a trick which the king played upon his courtiers at Fontainebleau. On Christmas Eve a procession of courtiers entered the brilliantly-lighted chapel of St. Saturnin. The king's custom on that anniversary was to present the officers of the household with fur cloaks, and all wore the royal gift. But Louis had secretly caused a cross to be embroidered in dark silk on the backs of the cloaks, so that, as they passed into the chapel, each man saw the crusading symbol on his neighbour's back. Perplexed and bewildered, they knew not how to interpret the king's purpose. But when St. Louis came forward, himself wearing the cross upon his shoulders, and asked whether they had the heart to tear off the badge and send him to the Holy Land alone, they cried with one voice, "We will follow thee! We will bear the cross!"

At Fontainebleau in 1268 Philip the Fair was born. His reign formed a marked era in the history of France. Now was inaugurated the foreign policy of Henry IV and Richelieu. The strength of feudalism was weakened, the government concentrated, justice established, an army

organised, the religious and secular power separated, and, to crown the whole, the nation was for the first time summoned to a States-General. The changes bore the trace of the vigorous personality of the active, resolute, persevering king. Like his grandfather, Philip added many buildings to the palace ; like him, he delighted in the pleasures of the chase ; and it was in the Forest of Fontainebleau, in 1341, when in pursuit of a wild boar, *grand et merveilleux*, that he met his death by a fall from his horse. Thus the king, within the appointed time, obeyed the summons of the illustrious victim of his policy, Jacques de Molay, Grand Master of the Templars, who, at the stake, had bidden Philip to meet him "four months hence at the judgment seat of God." It was long believed that the heart of Philip the Fair was buried at Avon, the mother parish of Fontainebleau. The accuracy of modern historians has discovered that it is his cook, and not his heart, that reposes there.

It was in the castle of Fontainebleau that Charles V, surnamed the Wise, founded his famous library, and here, as tradition asserts, by paintings on its walls Charles VII commemorated his victories over the English. But from the death of Philip the Fair till the accession of Francis I the stream of history flowed in other channels. Fontainebleau is associated with none of the great episodes in the struggle between the Burgundians and the Armagnacs, or between the

French and the English. The exigencies of State policy led sovereign after sovereign to prefer the castles of Touraine. It was, for example, at Chinon, or at Loches, that Charles VII passed his life, though, faithful to Agnes Sorel in death, it was at Jumièges that he desired to be buried by her side. It was at Plessis-les-Tours, in the turret chamber behind the existing guard-room of the Scottish archers, that Louis XI immured himself; it was in the iron cage or dungeons of Loches that his victims languished; and it was at Cléry, near Orleans, that the "perjured prince" adored his "leaden saint." At Amboise Charles VIII founded his Italian colony, and in its precincts still exists the low-arched doorway which proved fatal to the king. At Blois Louis XII was born, and he preferred his birthplace to all his other castles, and it was to Blois that he invited the great artist whom his secretary calls Leonard Davince.

The modern Fontainebleau dates from the gallant knight-errant, Francis I. A giant among his courtiers, a graceful horseman, an expert wrestler, a dexterous swordsman, Francis was hailed as the glass of fashion and the mirror of chivalry. Succeeding to the throne at the moment when the young nobility of France were wearied of the economies of "le bon roi Louis Douze," he enjoyed the means as well as the opportunity of indulging his love of lavish display. Deeply read in chivalric romances, he had framed to himself

an ideal of a knightly king, and, in the opinion of his flatterers, he united the love of glory and highbred courtesy of Roland with the virtues of the most constant of lovers, Amadis de Gaule. It was Francis and the brilliant Pleiad of artists whom he gathered round him who were the true creators of the modern Fontainebleau. Everywhere his salamander appears upon the walls, ceilings, and woodwork, commemorating the victories of the king—to whom had yielded the bear of the Swiss, the eagles of the Germans, the viper of Milan.

“Ursus atrox, aquilæque leves, et tortilis anguis  
Cesserunt flammæ jam, Salamandra, tuæ.”

It was Francis I who reconstructed the ancient buildings and added tenfold to their extent and decorative splendour. Vast sums of money were expended on the palace, which he called “*mon Fontainebleau*,” his beloved *Chez Moi*, and which was now transformed from a feudal castle into *la vraie maison des rois*, to quote the words of Napoleon I—*la demeure des siècles*. All the forces which had revolutionised society were reflected in the changes effected at Fontainebleau. Italian influences, grace, and refinement of manners, reverence for classical antiquity—everything, in short, that inspired the Renaissance movement—are imprinted on the style and the form of the architecture and the decoration. At one bound, as it were, we pass from the feudal

world to modern requirements—from defensive strength to tasteful elegance. The distinguished colony of Italian artists whom Francis employed upon the work powerfully affected the direction of the art of the French Renaissance. To the grave companions of St. Louis, or the rude warriors of the Middle Ages, succeeded the architects, painters, sculptors, metal-workers, and scholars of Italy. In the centre of the *chers déserts*, to which a saintly king came to dream of heavenly glory, rose a palace of Armida, the fitting scene for the ideal pageants of artists, or the gorgeous festivities of an Arabian Caliph. Fontainebleau became a French Vatican, in which Francis played the part of Leo the Magnificent, and made of his palace, in the words of Benvenuto Cellini, a second Rome.

At the summons of this magnificent patron of the arts, the Mæcenas of France, as he delighted to be called, Leonardo da Vinci came to Fontainebleau to be received with all the honours of his right divine of genius, to be petted and honoured by the king in his soured and querulous old age. Though Leonardo painted nothing in France, he brought with him into the country the famous “Mona Lisa,” which is still one of the chief glories of the Louvre. In France he died, at the Château de Clous, in 1529, not, as tradition relates, in the arms of the king, but with his friend Malzi at his bedside. To Fontainebleau came also Andrea del Sarto, and here he laboured fitfully till he

left his art for the soulless beauty of his wife, to whom he sacrificed his splendid gifts. But neither Leonardo nor Andrea del Sarto is the creator of Fontainebleau. The plan of the new buildings was designed by the architect Serlio, and they were partly executed under the superintendence of Rosso, and subsequently of Primaticcio. Before the plans could be carried out, the space had to be enlarged. It is a significant commentary on the tendency of the time, that the religious order of the Mathurins, established by St. Louis, were bought out, and the buildings which they had occupied handed over to Italians inspired by the revived paganism of the Renaissance. It was now that the Cour Ovale, the site of the donjon of St. Louis, received something like its present shape. The great courtyard, by which the palace is entered from the side of Paris, was also laid out in its existing form. Year after year, and reign after reign, vast treasures of money and of genius were lavished on the walls within and without, and the work of construction, destruction and decoration may be said to have continued to the days of Napoleon III.

Under Francis I, Battista di Jacopo, called by the French Maître Roux, and by the Italians Rosso, from the colour of his hair and complexion, was appointed "chief and superintendent over all the buildings, paintings, and other decoration of the palace." He enjoyed a princely salary, a house in Paris, apartments at Fontainebleau, a

canonry as abbé, and a train of attendants befitting his wealth and position. For some years he reigned alone, until his supremacy was disputed by Primaticcio, whose rising genius attracted the notice of Francis I. In the palace are still preserved traces of the jealousy of the two great artists, each sustained by the rivalry of a royal mistress. When Rosso poisoned himself in 1541, Primaticcio succeeded to his rival's place as chief and superintendent, and, supported by the Duchesse d'Étampes, was enabled to rid himself of so formidable a competitor as Benvenuto Cellini. Round the quarrels of these great artists are interwoven the rivalries of the two royal mistresses. In the figure of Danaë visited by Jupiter in the shape of golden rain is recorded the beauty of Anne de Pisseleu, the girl who was trained by Louise of Savoy for the part of royal mistress, and who, for twenty years, and till the death of Francis I, was *maîtresse en titre*. The patroness of poets and painters, the protectress of the reformed religion, the wittiest of learned ladies, the most beautiful of bluestockings, she held her own against her rival Diane de Poitiers. But at the accession of Henry II came Diane's hour of triumph. Even during the lifetime of Francis the heart of Henry was held captive by his father's mistress, whose wonderful retention of her beauty, and her supremacy over two successive sovereigns, were attributed to sorcery. Her portrait, with the bow and arrows and hound of the chaste goddess Diana, her cres-



cent moons, her monograms, her emblems, everywhere attest her absolute rule over Henry II, who, on all public occasions, wore her colours of black slashed with white.

Nor was it only in depicting the rivalries of royal mistresses that the genius of artists was employed. Here, during the sixteenth century, laboured on buildings, frescoes, ceilings, panelling, paintings, sculptures, Lucca Penni, Naldini, Bellini, Pellegrini, Niccolò dell' Abbate, and a host of native artists, such as Jean Cousin, Pierre Bontemps, Jean Goujon, Germain Pilon, Jean Lescot, and Philibert Delorme. The agents of the king scoured Europe to collect arms, and jewels, and works of art. At Rome Primaticcio purchased for his royal master specimens of ancient statuary, and Vasari counts 125 famous master-pieces which thus passed into possession of the French. At Rome, also, were working a director and staff of skilled workmen, who copied and modelled the sculptures and bas-reliefs which Francis was unable to purchase or transport to France. Nowhere were the *chefs d'œuvre* of Italian cookery served on a greater profusion of gold and silver plate; nowhere was the table adorned with such splendid specimens of the glass manufactures of Venice and the rival establishments in France. Matteo was summoned from Verona to superintend the metal-workers. Tapestries were brought from Arras and Brussels, and a manufactory was set up in Fontainebleau, where

workmen executed the designs of Primaticcio. Manuscripts were gathered from Europe and from Asia to enrich the royal library, already enlarged by the collections brought from Blois and by the confiscated treasures of the Constable of Bourbon. Among the custodians of the royal library were Budé, Duchâtel, Amyot, and J. A. de Thou. Priceless frescoes and pictures, statues of inestimable worth, rare manuscripts, treasures of golden and silver plate, of gems, jewellery, and arms, made the Fontainebleau of Francis I and Henry II the admiration and envy of Europe. It was now that in the chapel raised upon the subterranean crypt of St. Saturnin, the crescent of Diane de Poitiers appeared above the altar, epitomising, as it were, the transition from the mediæval piety of St. Louis to the cultivated taste and elegant licence of the Renaissance.

In this magnificent palace Francis I received the Emperor Charles V. For once, and for once only, Rosso and Primaticcio laid aside their professional jealousies and personal rivalries, and united in the effort to celebrate the advent of such a guest with becoming magnificence. The ancient enemy of the French monarchy was met in the forest by troops of gods and goddesses, by fauns, satyrs, and woodland nymphs. Balls, masquerades, banquets, hunting parties, tournaments, illuminations, were organised in his honour. On the first night of his arrival the Duchesse d'Étampes herself brought the water to wash his hands, and the

astute emperor—so runs the incredible legend—seized the opportunity of conciliating the powerful mistress. He dropped into the ewer a magnificent diamond, which the duchess returned to him. He entreated her to keep it, and so, it is said, won her over to his political schemes.

The works of Francis I were carried on by his successors. Catherine de Medicis had inherited from her family, and brought from Italy, the love of the fine arts, and in this taste, at least, was in sympathy with her husband. In 1533 Catherine, then an orphan, and “a short thickset girl of thirteen, with a large head, flat face, and restless eyes,” had been married to Henry of Orleans, a well-grown, handsome youth of fifteen. Even when just in her teens she was described as “very subtle-minded, reserved, full of ambition and artifice.” The marriage with the daughter of the Florentine banker, which was the price paid by Francis for the support of Pope Clement VII in his claims to the imperial crown, was regarded by the French aristocracy as a *mésalliance*. Over her husband Catherine had little influence. He was already captive in the chains of Diane de Poitiers. But she was prepared to observe, to watch and wait; for the stars had foretold her destined rule over the King of France. Like her father-in-law, and like her husband, she was an enthusiastic builder. Her special superstitions are strongly marked in the palaces she inhabited. At Chaumont, for instance, is the little turret by which she

could ascend the roof to study the constellations. At Blois, again, the tower of her astrologer stands close to the château.

It was an age of building. At Chambord, Anet, Chenonceaux, the Louvre, Blois, great works were in progress. At Fontainebleau, under Henry II, the building and the decoration of the palace continued uninterruptedly, broken only by the occasional removal of some master-builder suspected of the new opinions. Here, at Fontainebleau, were born two of his sons, afterwards Francis II and Charles IX. The great work which commemorates the name of Henry II is the gallery, called after his name, on which Primaticcio and Niccolò dell' Abbate squandered their artistic talents. On the ceiling, and on the walls, are to be seen his monogram, which was capable of being read as H. C. or H. D., according to the sympathies of the supporters of Catherine de Medicis or of Diane de Poitiers. But in other decorations less ambiguity was possible ; everywhere predominate the emblems of *la vieille ridée*, as her enemies called her, who caught and held for twenty years the heart of Henry II. It was from the study of this gallery, constructed and decorated in the purest style of the Renaissance, that the great French artists, who were destined to be the leaders of the French movement, and to give to the exaggerated imitation of Italian traditions the simplicity and purity of a native school, drew their inspiration.

In the tiltyard at the Palace of Des Tourelles,

which then stood at the end of the Rue St. Antoine, and was still the royal residence at Paris, Henry met his death from the lance of Montgomery. But it was at Fontainebleau that his son and successor, Francis II, terrified by the conspiracy of Amboise, convened an extraordinary assembly to consider the affairs of the nation. The council met in August 1560, and, with the exception of the King of Navarre and Condé, it was attended by all the great leaders in the coming struggle between the Huguenots and the Catholics. The Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine were present on the one side; on the other, Coligny and his brother Châtillon. Moderate counsels found their spokesman in the Chancellor L'Hôpital. The deliberations lasted four days. It was then that Coligny delivered a fiery speech, in which he demanded toleration for the Calvinists, and, in words that must have sounded to his hearers like a threat, declared that 50,000 men would support his request. There, also, Jean de Montluc, Bishop of Valence, exposed the vices of the higher ranks of the clergy. The result of the conference was the convocation of the States-General at Orleans. Trusting to the king's safe conduct, Condé attended its deliberations. But he was arrested, condemned to the scaffold, and only escaped with his life through the sudden death of the king in December 1560.

Fontainebleau was the birthplace of Charles IX. Its forests were to him the enchanted Broceliande,

in which he and his brothers had played the parts of the heroes of mediæval romance. The half-mad boy excelled his predecessors in lavish expenditure on the festivities with which he sought to distract his mind. Here the courtiers ruined themselves and squandered their estates in the extravagance of their attire. Fashions changed from hour to hour. To-day the brim of the hat extended beyond the shoulders; to-morrow the cap scarcely covered the head. Now the mantle reached to the ankles, now to the loins. One day shoes were worn "in the Greek fashion, as high as the middle of the leg; another day they were in the fashion of Savoy, so short and narrow that they resembled tubes." A score of dresses, all richly embroidered with stores of laces, feathers, and ruffles, were required by any one who wished to make a decent appearance at court. At Fontainebleau lists for tournaments were erected, closed with barriers and commanded by bowers in which sat the courtly beauties. At one end stood an enchanted castle held by six adventurous knights, and guarded by a monstrous giant and a diminutive dwarf. Here the princes and nobles of the court disported themselves; now dividing into Greeks and Trojans; now, as wandering knights, rescuing fair ladies from the enchanted castle; now dividing into companies and fighting against each other under chosen leaders. It was from Fontainebleau that Charles and his mother set out on their lengthy progress through the

south of France, that fatal journey in which, as Protestant historians assert, the queen and the Duke of Alva plotted to exterminate the Huguenots. Tournaments and banquets and masquerades were redoubled after the massacre of St. Bartholomew. By a perpetual Arabian Nights' Entertainment Catherine vainly strove to lay the ghost of remorse, which her action had roused in the unhappy, lean, demented, red-haired youth to whom life had become a grievous burden.

None of the French sovereigns showed a deeper love for Fontainebleau than Henry IV, and with no place are more events of his reign associated. His monogram, as well as his shield, quartering the lilies of France with the girony of eight which belongs to Navarre, are seen in every part of the palace. Sometimes his "H" is linked with the "M" of his wife, Marie de Medicis. Here and there the "S," traversed by an arrow, which was the punning device of Gabrielle d'Estrées, commemorates, like the crescents of Diane de Poitiers, the ascendancy of an uncrowned queen. The chapel of the Holy Trinity, close to the great entrance of the palace, was his work. Upon it a number of French artists, among whom were Germain Pilon<sup>1</sup> and Jean Dubois, have employed their genius under the direction of Freminet. The origin of the chapel dates from 1608, when the

<sup>1</sup> Pilon is said to have executed some of the work at the chapel; but, if the date now most commonly assigned for his death (1590) is correct, this is impossible.

Spanish ambassador visited Fontainebleau. Observing the mean appearance of the existing chapel, Don Pedro remarked that "God was more poorly lodged than the king." Henry was ready with his retort. "It is because," he replied, "the French do not enshrine their God, as do the Spaniards, only within four walls. They lodge Him also in their hearts." But the taunt produced its effect, and the chapel was its result. Its construction is, as it were, a translation into stone of the strong reaction against Protestantism which the seventeenth century witnessed in France. In the chapel have been celebrated innumerable royal marriages and royal baptisms; but more interesting than these were the masses of St. Hubert, which were celebrated on the day dedicated to the patron saint of the chase in the presence, and for the safety, of

"Mastiff, greyhound, mongrel grim,  
Hound or spaniel, brach or lym,  
Or bobtail tyke or trundle tail."

There every year, from the reign of Henry IV to that of Napoleon III, masses were said "*en présence des lévriers, braques, bassets, chiens courants, batteurs, babillants, et toute la populace des chiens*," for whose preservation from danger prayer was made to Heaven.

One of the favourite legends of the forest commemorates Henry's passion for the chase. In the early spring of 1599, the king was hunting



in the part of the forest which lies on the road to Moret, and near him were riding the princes and great nobles of his court. Suddenly the whole company heard the clang of horns, the cries of huntsmen, and the yapping of hounds, coming, as it seemed to them, from a spot at least half a league distant. The next moment the noises which had seemed so remote sounded in their very ears. The king sent the Comte de Soissons and other persons with him to discover what the sounds meant. Yet, though they heard the noises all around them, they could not see whence they proceeded. But in the densest part of the thicket they saw a tall black figure of very hideous countenance, who raised his head above the bushes, and said, *M'entendez-vous ?* or *Qu'attendez-vous ?* or, as some maintained, for they were too startled to be certain of the words, *Amendez-vous*. And the next moment the spectre vanished.

The courtiers returned and told the king what they had witnessed. Then he sent for the charcoal-burners, the wood-cutters, the shepherds, and other persons, who are at all times and seasons in the forest, and inquired of them whether they had ever seen any such spectre, or heard similar sounds of huntsmen, horns, and hounds. And they replied that very often a tall dark man, accoutred as a huntsman, appeared to them, and that they called him the "Grand Veneur." It is added that Sully, while sitting in his cabinet, heard, almost at his windows, the noise of a

hunting party. Believing that it was the king returning, he hastened to meet him. But he found no one there, and afterwards he learned that the king was at that moment three leagues away.

“I know,” adds Dan, “that many authors tell stories of the chase of St. Hubert, which they say that they hear in various places. Nor am I ignorant of what is told of the ‘whipper,’ who appeared to Charles IX in the Forest of Lyons, and who left the marks of the lashes of his whip upon a number of persons. Nor do I doubt that there may be demons who wander through the forest as well as through the air. But I also know very well that as to this ‘Grand Veneur,’ nothing can be said for certain.”

Was it in consequence of this warning apparition that, as Easter 1599 approached, Henry IV followed the counsel of his confessor, and dismissed Gabrielle d’Estrées for a fortnight from the court? Was it poison which, during this same temporary absence, cut short her career at the table of the financier, Zamet? A mystery hangs over the fate of Henry’s fascinating mistress, who, as even Protestant historians relate, lived in the court without making a single enemy.

Henry was not only an enthusiastic sportsman, but, like Francis I, a great decorator and builder. He laid out the gardens and the park, forming the “Mail Henri Quatre,” and adorning the centre of the lake with its island temple. Many of the structures erected in his reign have been altered

by his successors, and especially by Louis XV; others still remain intact. The *Galerie des Cerfs*, as well as the *Galerie de Diane*, were his works. In the former *Monaldeschi* was murdered; in the latter, built at the request of *Gabrielle d'Estrées*, the library is now arranged. Henry's private cabinet still remains, at the door of which *Biron* was arrested. The "*Salle de Conseil*" is now the *Musée Chinois*; but it is more interesting as the room in which was held the famous conference between *Du Plessis Mornay* and the *Cardinal Du Perron*. The detached pavilion on the east of the palace was built by the king for *Sully*, and, in order to be convenient of access, it communicated with the main building by arcades. The open dome, under which passes the entrance to the *Cour Ovale*, was erected by him for the open-air baptism of his son, afterwards *Louis XIII*.

In the *Salle de Conseil* at *Fontainebleau* on Tuesday, May 4, 1599, was held the famous conference, in which the Pope of the Protestants, *Du Plessis Mornay*, was confronted with the Bishop of *Evreux*, afterwards *Cardinal Du Perron*. In his book on the *Eucharist*<sup>1</sup> *Du Plessis Mornay* made a variety of quotations which the bishop alleged to be false. The conference was summoned not to decide points of doctrine, but to determine the authenticity of the Protestant quotations. In the centre of the *Salle de Conseil*, which ran along one side of the *Cour Ovale*, was placed a porphyry

<sup>1</sup> "De l'Institution . . . du Sainct Sacrement de l'Eucharistie."

table. There, at one o'clock, the members of the Council took their places. The king sat at one end, having on his right the Roman Catholic champion, on his left the Protestant leader. At the opposite end of the table sat the secretaries. Behind, and on either side of the king, were princes, great officers of State, archbishops, bishops, and nobles. Among the commissioners appointed to assist the king from the two hostile communions was Casaubon.

The assembly took their places. A copy of Du Plessis Mornay's work, printed in quarto form at Rochelle by Haultin, was placed before the king. By the side of the incriminated book was set a list of sixty passages selected from the 500 impugned by Du Perron. The inquiry began with a further choice of nineteen passages from the shorter list, and on the authenticity of these the question turned. Nine passages only had been examined, and in the case of all, so say the Roman Catholic historians, had the meaning of the quotations been falsified, when the Protestant leader fell ill. His sickness, said his enemies, was feigned. Be this as it may, he did not return to the conference, which therefore was broken up. The defeat of their champion was a severe blow to the Huguenot cause, and many persons at once abjured Calvinism. Thus, rejoices Dan, "As it had pleased God to create the Hydra of heresy, so also it pleased Him to create the Hercules for its destruction."

At Fontainebleau also was enacted the first scene

in the tragic fate of the Marshal de Biron. Biron, who was governor of Burgundy, was suspected by the king of intriguing with Spain and Savoy. His designs were betrayed by his secretary, Lafin, who placed in Henry's hands evidence which proved the guilt of the Marshal de Biron. He was therefore summoned by Henry to Fontainebleau. Biron arrived on Wednesday, June 13, 1602. He reached the palace at six in the morning, and found the king just entering the garden. Henry received him graciously, and embraced him with much kindness. Then, taking him by the hand, he walked with him through the gardens, pointing out the buildings and other works which he was carrying out. He then pressed him closely to tell him the truth, promising him his pardon. But Biron, believing in the fidelity of Lafin, who had in fact betrayed him, replied that he had nothing to confess, and he refused a favour of which he had no need.

After a long conversation, they parted for dinner. The meal ended, they walked in the Salle de la Belle Cheminée, and, as they looked at the equestrian statue of the king in full armour, which forms its central ornament, Henry asked the marshal, perhaps with the purpose of sounding him, "What, think you, would the King of Spain say if he saw me like that?" Biron, in his usual brusque manner, and without casting about for graceful compliments, replied, "Sire, he would have no fear of you at all." The king was piqued

by the answer, and shortly afterwards retired to his cabinet. Presently Biron was summoned to his presence, and again urged to make a full confession. Again he refused, asserting that he had nothing to confess. "I want," said the king to Sully, "to pardon this unfortunate man ; but I am afraid if I do so, he on his side will neither forgive me, nor my son, nor the State." Sully then endeavoured to induce the marshal to make a full confession. But he met with no better success. "I have nothing to tell the king or you," was Biron's answer.

In the afternoon the king played at tennis, with the Comte de Soissons for his partner, against the Duc d'Epemon and Biron. The marshal made a brilliant stroke, which elicited from the king the remark, "You are a fine player, marshal, but you are never on good terms with your partner." And the onlookers, interpreting the words by subsequent events, found in them a sinister meaning.

After the set was finished the king went to supper. Once more, through the Comte de Soissons, he endeavoured to induce Biron to confess, but the latter strongly maintained his innocence. The next morning the king summoned him to the garden and asked him, "Well, Monsieur de Biron, is there no possible means by which we may learn something from you?" Then Biron lost his temper, breaking out into vehement invectives against all who had slandered him to the king. Henry at once took his measures. The marshal's friends

advised him to escape. The Comtesse de Roussi sent him a note, saying, "If you are not off at once, in two hours you will be arrested." While playing at cards with the queen, the Comte d'Auvergne whispered in his ear, "It is not well for us to be here." Still, however, Biron lingered. At midnight, as he was leaving the king's apartment, he was arrested and confined in the Pavillon des Armes close to the tennis court. The next evening he was taken by boat to Paris to be imprisoned in the Bastille. There, a few weeks later, he was led by torchlight into the courtyard of the prison and beheaded. The one favour which Henry granted to his former friend was to spare him a public execution in the Place de Grève.

Four years later Fontainebleau was the scene of a magnificent spectacle. The Dauphin of France, afterwards Louis XIII, and his two sisters were baptized in the baptistery erected for the purpose in the gateway entering the Cour Ovale. The whole of the courtyard was covered over with an awning. All the grandees of the realm were present, and Pope Paul V was represented by his legate as one of the godfathers. The ceremony, which began at four, ended at six. It was followed by illuminations, and banquetings continued into the next day. Never was such magnificence seen before. The hilt of the sword of the Duc d'Épernon was set with 1,800 diamonds; the dress of the Marshal de Bassompierre, which cost 600 crowns, was of violet cloth of gold, and in the embroidery there was

employed 50 lb. weight of pearls. The baptism was accompanied also by strange portents in the sky. The heavens were lit up by a bright light which passed from west to east; armies of men, some on fiery cars, some on foot, some on horseback, fought battles in mid-air; the contest was furious, and multitudes seemed to be slain. The strange spectacle was interpreted by astrologers to mean that the young dauphin would receive the crown of Germany, reconquer Europe from the Turks, and overthrow the Ottoman Empire.

Throughout the reign of Louis XIII the work of building and decoration continued without interruption. The monogram of the king and his wife, Anne of Austria, as well as inscriptions commemorating the victories of the modern Hercules over the Protestant heresies, attests the hand of the royal builder. He completed the chapel of the Holy Trinity; he built the external staircase by which the palace is entered on the western side, and in nearly all the rooms and galleries some traces of the decorative art of his reign may be seen. It is rather the art than the history of the time which is illustrated in the palace.

Few events of the reign are connected with Fontainebleau. But it was here that the peace with England was signed in 1629. Hither, also, came more than once, borne in his huge crimson litter, Richelieu, whose clear-cut Dantesque features tell their tale of imperial purpose and high resolve, and from whose pitiless lips so often issued the



words *Pas de grâce*, which were fatal to hundreds besides Marion Delorme. Nor, if tradition be true, was Fontainebleau wholly unconnected with the birth of Louis XIV. In the neighbourhood of the palace is a village named Féricy, renowned for the blessed waters of St. Osmane, which were celebrated for their efficacy among childless women. In 1637 water from this fountain was conveyed to the Louvre, and, nine months later, the queen, who had hitherto proved barren, bore a son and heir to the throne.

On May 4, 1643, Louis XIV succeeded his father. During his childish years few personal associations connect him with Fontainebleau. The historical interest of the palace centres round two foreign queens, one of whom was an exile and the other had voluntarily abdicated her throne. In 1647 the palace offered an asylum to Queen Henrietta of England, and, nine years later, received Queen Christine of Sweden. With the latter guest is associated the tragedy of the death of Monaldeschi, whose sword and coat of mail are still preserved in the palace. The story of his murder which has been most generally followed is that told in the "Memoirs" of Madame de Motteville. From her pen the story has received many embellishments. But among the Harleian MSS. is the official declaration of the only known eyewitness of the scene, and it is from his statement that the following account is mainly taken :

In 1656 Christine, Queen of Sweden, had ab-

dicated her throne, and passed through Paris on her way to Italy. She made her entry on horseback, accompanied by the Duc de Guise, who represented the king, and was received at the Louvre with every sign of royal friendship. But in course of time her eccentricities, her manners, her language, her oaths so disgusted her hosts, that, in the following year, when she announced her intention of revisiting Paris, she was asked to halt at Fontainebleau. There, in October 1657, the king paid her a state visit, returning to the capital the next day.

A few days later, on November 10, was enacted that ghastly tragedy which sent a thrill of horror throughout civilised Europe. On November 6 the queen summoned to her presence the superior of the convent of the Mathurins, Father Lebel. She received him alone, bound him over to secrecy, and consigned to his care a sealed packet of papers. The following Saturday, on November 10, Lebel was again sent for. On entering the Galerie des Cerfs, the door was closely shut behind him. Halfway down the gallery stood the queen, one of the gentlemen of her train, and three other persons with drawn swords. Christine asked for the packet of letters, broke the seals, showed some of the documents to her equerry, and asked if they were his. The equerry, who proved to be the Marquis de Monaldeschi, in trembling accents, denied that he had written them. They were, in fact, copies made by herself. Christine then showed

him the originals, called him a traitor, and bade him acknowledge his hand. Monaldeschi then confessed the authorship of the letters, and, throwing himself upon his knees, implored pardon, casting the blame upon others, and making various excuses for his conduct.

Then Monaldeschi rose, and retired with the queen, first into one corner, then into another, of the gallery, praying her to hear his explanations. She listened with a totally unmoved countenance, sometimes asking a question, but never betraying the slightest sign of anger, and resting upon a round-handled stick of black ebony. At last, turning to Lebel, she said, "Father, be my witness that I am doing nothing in haste, and that I allow this perfidious traitor all the time, and more than all the time, he could have expected, to justify his conduct." And, in the hearing of Lebel, the marquis continued his pleadings. At the end of two hours, about three in the afternoon, she again turned to the priest, and said in a raised, but calm and serious, voice : "Father, I am about to withdraw. I leave this man to you. Prepare him for death, and take care of his soul." At these words, both Lebel and the marquis threw themselves at her feet, and pleaded for mercy. But Christine, addressing Lebel, told him that she could not grant him the favour which he asked. She had confided to Monaldeschi all her secrets, even all her thoughts, in the full belief that he was a faithful subject ; she had heaped upon him

benefits, as if he were her own and dearly loved brother ; she had condemned many a man to the wheel for less offences than this traitor had committed, and she, therefore, adhered to her determination. So saying, she left the room.

The three men with their swords drawn then came close to the marquis and urged him to confess, while Lebel, with tears in his eyes, exhorted him to ask pardon of God. Monaldeschi threw himself at the knees of the priest, and implored him to intercede with the queen. So piteous and moving were his entreaties, that Sentinelli, the leader of the three executioners, sought the presence of Christine, and begged her to spare him. He returned in a few minutes, and said, "Marquis, turn your thoughts to your soul and to God. You must die!" Then Lebel endeavoured himself to divert the queen from her purpose. He found the blue-eyed, hawk-nosed woman as calm and collected as if she had given the simplest and most ordinary order. All his entreaties were utterly useless. He returned into the gallery, embraced the marquis, and exhorted him, in the most moving language at his command, to trust in God's mercy and prepare for death. At these words Monaldeschi uttered two or three piercing screams, and then, throwing himself on his knees before the priest, began to confess. In his agitation the confession was a jumble of Latin, French, and Italian.

Before the confession was completed, the royal

almoner looked into the gallery. Seeing him, Monaldeschi sprang to his feet, and, without waiting for the absolution, implored his intercession. Seizing his hands, he pleaded so earnestly that the almoner left the room, taking with him the chief executioner. In a few minutes the latter returned alone, and, with the words "Marquis, ask God's pardon! without further waste of time you must die," drove him back against the wall at the end of the gallery. With his sword, he struck the victim in the stomach. Monaldeschi grasped the sword with his hand, and the other, drawing it from him, cut off two of his fingers. But the sword was bent, showing that Monaldeschi wore, as proved to be the case, a coat of mail. Then one or other of the armed men struck him a blow in the face, and the marquis, crying "Father! father!" sank on his knees. Lebel drew near; the executioners stood back; and Monaldeschi, having completed his confession, received absolution. The moment that the words were said he received a violent blow over the head, and lay on the floor, making signs to the executioners to cut his throat. They struck him several times on the neck, but the coat of mail intercepted the blows. He was still living, when again the door opened, and the almoner entered. Crawling along the floor, the wounded wretch dragged himself to the feet of the almoner, and from him again received absolution. This given, Sentinelli drove his sword through the throat of Christine's victim. The marquis never

spoke again. He lingered a quarter of an hour longer, while Lebel hung over him, crying "Jésus Maria" and other words of devotion. For many years the spot in the gallery where he breathed his last was marked with the word "Dieu," his last articulate utterance. At a quarter to four he was dead; at a quarter to six his corpse had been removed to the church at Avon, where a tablet, bearing the inscription "CY GIST MONALDELXI," still marks the place of his interment. On the Sunday following Christine sent a sum of money to Lebel to provide masses for the soul of her late servant.

The murder of Monaldeschi is the most striking scene which connects the reign of Louis XIV with Fontainebleau. Though the Grand Monarque paid frequent visits to the palace, and though it was here that, in 1661, he proclaimed, with festivities of extraordinary splendour, the birth of his son, yet Versailles and Marly were his favourite residences, and it was there that he celebrated the victories of Condé, Turenne, Vauban, and Luxembourg. The structural and decorative changes at Fontainebleau which were his handiwork betray the character of the king and of his age. The canons of pure taste, the laws of strict harmony, were forced to obey the will of the absolute despot. A profusion of heavy gilding marks the pomp and emphasis of the Augustan age of the Grand Monarque. In ingenious mythological fictions are celebrated the splendours of its Cæsar, who enters

Dunkirk wearing the casque, breastplate, and cloak of a Roman, surmounted by the wig of the Court of Versailles. As at Versailles, so at Fontainebleau, the king delighted in fountains, and the groups of statues in marble or bronze which adorn *les cascades* were the work of the sculptors of the period.

It was at Fontainebleau that Louis XIV was first smitten with love for Louise de la Vallière. Here, in 1661, the year of his son's birth, the twenty-four *violons du roi* struck up the overture to the first representation of one of Molière's comedies, in which the author himself played a part. Here, in 1690, James II of England found a refuge in the palace which had sheltered his mother. Here, from time to time, were celebrated the brilliant festivities which marked the early portion of the king's reign, and here, in gloom and darkness, the sun of France slowly set. Here, under the rule of Madame de Maintenon, piety became the fashion; here, in her pavilion, she shivered with the cold, while she consulted Mouthier on new dishes to tickle the jaded palate of Louis. And it was at Fontainebleau that two of the most momentous events of the king's reign took place. Within the walls of the palace he signed the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, and in 1700 decided to accept the will of Charles II, which left the throne of Spain to his grandson, the Duke of Anjou, afterwards Philip V. The council at which this last important step was

taken was held in the room of Madame de Maintenon. In all his doubts and difficulties the king had long been accustomed to consult the woman whom he nicknamed *La Solidité* or *La Raison*. Such deference to the judgment of a woman, even if she had been, as was supposed, the legal wife of the sovereign, was extraordinary. "It was not without surprise," says St. Simon, "that France saw her assume a public part in the deliberation of affairs, and the astonishment was extreme when two councils met in her apartments to discuss the greatest and most important question that had ever been raised throughout the whole length of the reign." It was on the instigation of Madame de Maintenon that Louis took the momentous step which upset the balance of power and plunged Europe into war.

In September 1715 Louis lay dying. For months past his health had been impaired, though he resented the suggestion of Madame de Maintenon that he should eat more sparingly of strawberries and peas, and abstain from highly seasoned dishes. His death was received by a depressed, despairing people with every demonstration of delight. He left behind him a kingdom drained of its resources, an empty treasury, a heavy burden of debt, and commerce and manufactures, which were once flourishing, almost extinguished. Nor among the enervated aristocracy who thronged to an idle, vicious, hypocritical court, was there a single



statesman who was capable of taking the helm of government. In the crowd that gathered in the faubourg to curse the conqueror, as his coffin was carried by bye-paths and unfrequented roads to St. Denis, might be seen the progenitors of that maddened mob who, eighty years later, violated his tomb, and scattered his ashes to the wind.

Louis XV has left behind him innumerable traces, both constructive and destructive, of his reign at Fontainebleau. There, as elsewhere, the court danced its giddy dance of death in the years which preceded the Revolution. Throughout the whole period which elapsed between the death of the Grand Monarch and the convention of the States-General the popular indignation was steadily increasing. During the dissipations of the Regency, the dull decorum of the early period of the reign of Louis XV, the unbridled debauchery of his later years, the movement gathered irresistible strength. With fatal skill the king carried on the work of destroying the grandeur of the French monarchy, and the part which he played at Fontainebleau was that of the destroyer of its buildings. His hand pulled down the famous Galerie d'Ulysse, in which Primaticcio and Niccolò dell' Abbate had painted the adventures of the king of Ithaca. His hand, again, demolished the Salle de la Belle Cheminée to make room for the theatre, which Madame de Pompadour raised in its place, and which was burned in 1856. Many

existing portions of the palace date from his reign ; but their external appearance is mean and ineffective. Their internal decoration, on the other hand, is often exquisitely graceful. The royal apartments, for instance, are beautiful examples of the style of Louis XV, the ceilings adorned by Boucher, the panels by Charles Vanloo. Here, too, the artistic and the political histories of the time go hand in hand. The strength and vigour of the *ancien régime* were sapped and weakened, while the one redeeming feature of a degenerate society was the ease and elegance of its manners. And even these were as artificial as were Boucher's affected grace, superficial charm of colouring, and figures drawn not from nature but from imagination.

It was at Rambouillet or at Choisy that Louis worked his tapestry, or delved, or turned, or cooked, with his own hands, the most delicate dishes of his *petits soupers*. But at Fontainebleau, each in their turn, the four sisters of the house of Nesle reigned as *maîtresses en titre* ; here, also, Madame de Pompadour, and afterwards Madame du Barry, had their apartments. The Queen, Maria Leczinska, seven years older than her boy bridegroom, was a plain, unintellectual, narrow-minded woman of exemplary piety. She was the mother of many of the king's children ; but she was incapable of retaining, if she ever possessed, his affections. Her time was spent at her toilet, or at her *prie-dieu*, or at the lansquenet table.

Play ran high, and, if Voltaire is to be trusted, cheating prevailed in the royal boudoir, as later it is said to have prevailed in that of Marie Antoinette. Whilst J.-J. Rousseau fled from the court, Voltaire solicited its favours. One evening when he was in waiting as a gentleman-in-ordinary of the royal chamber, the Marquise de Châtelet lost 84,000 francs at lansquenet in the queen's *salon*. Voltaire said to her in English, "You are playing with cheats." His remark was overheard, and he judged it prudent to take refuge at Sceaux, where he remained for several months in hiding.

The true queen of France, and not only queen, but regent and prime minister, was Madame de Pompadour. A brilliant horsewoman, Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson had first attracted the notice of the king by her equestrian skill and her velvet habit of the bright blue known as *l'œil du roi*. Once installed as mistress, she completely dominated the king. Her fertile fancy and ready wit suggested amusements for his jaded appetite; she carefully consulted his gastronomic tastes in company with her famous *chef*, Mouthier, who inherited the genius of his father, and boasted of his descent from a line of cooks. Her indefatigable industry relieved his shoulders from all the burden of State business. Her supremacy was undisputed. Her artistic taste, aided by the graceful fancy of Boucher, is associated with every detail of the *style Louis XV*. It was at her request that the manufactories of Gobelin tapestry and Sèvres

china were placed under royal patronage. The choice library which she gathered in her hotel, afterwards the Élysée Bourbon, the plates which she engraved, the pieces which she modelled in Sèvres, the rare medals and masterpieces of furniture which she collected, prove that, low-born though she was, she was not unfitted to direct the fashion of art and of dress.

It was in her theatre at Fontainebleau that, in 1752, was acted "*Le Devin du Village*," a new opera in one act, of which, says the "*Gazette*" of October 21, the "*Sieur Rousseau de Genève*" is the author. Vast sums were expended on Madame de Pompadour's theatre, and, to make room for it, a masterpiece of sixteenth-century art was, as has been already said, destroyed by the king's orders. The people, dying of hunger, miserable and desperate, bitterly complained, according to the "*Journal d'Argenson*," of the reckless expenditure. The representation of "*Le Devin du Village*" thus groups in effective proximity the principal elements of the impending Revolution—the growing resentment of a starving people, the reckless prodigality of the court, the charm of its high-bred society, the contempt for the glories of the past, and the man who, beyond all others, translated into an eloquent theory the callous offences of an aristocratic clique and the muttered execrations of an unprivileged majority.

In Rousseau's "*Confessions*" will be found an amusing description of the scene. With all his

affectation of the *ton Romain*, Jean-Jacques was as shamefaced and self-conscious as an awkward schoolboy in the presence of the fashionable world. With untidy dress, unkempt beard, and ill-combed perruque, he found himself placed in a prominent position in the centre of a gorgeously dressed crowd, and immediately opposite the box in which were seated the king and Madame de Pompadour. Many of the men were clad in coats of that shade of blue which had come to be known, not as *l'œil du roi*, but as *bleu Pompadour*, and which Voltaire himself did not disdain to wear. The ladies wore the *fichus* and *coiffures à la Marquise*; the sword-knots of the soldiers were tied in the *rosette à la Pompadour*. As soon as the great lights were lit, Rousseau found himself among the crowd of court beauties—the only man in that part of the theatre. He expected to be treated with haughty coldness. On the contrary, he found every one civil and attentive. Ill at ease, he made speeches to himself. As to his beard, it was the work of nature. His dress was simple, but not dirty. If he was thought to be ridiculous or impertinent, he cared nothing for undeserved blame. Thus soliloquising, he encouraged himself to bear with intrepidity the curiosity with which he was regarded.

His opera proved a complete success. The ladies all around him wept, and Rousseau also wept, delighted to give pleasure to so many women, who were “beautiful as angels.” As to the king, the

music was, for the next twenty-four hours, always in his mouth. He never ceased singing, in a voice which was more out of tune than any other in the kingdom, "J'ai perdu mon serviteur." The triumph which his opera obtained put Rousseau at his ease. But during the night all his fears returned. He was to be presented to the king, and there was a talk of a pension. He wished, he says, so far as was compatible with the tone and air of severity that he had adopted, to show himself sensible of the honour paid him by the king. But his unreadiness of speech and his constitutional timidity convinced him that he would be entirely at a loss for words. Almost before daybreak he pleaded ill-health, and fled from Fontainebleau.

The Trianons at Versailles are more closely associated with Marie Antoinette than the boudoirs of Fontainebleau. It was at Versailles, among her milkmaids and shepherdesses, that she struck the first blow in the cause of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" by abolishing the *tabouret*, a privilege of being seated in the presence of the king and queen. It was there also that she developed her passion for gambling, for lavishing extravagant gifts on her favourites, for introducing outrageous fashions and head-dresses, like the "Ques-a-cos,"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Ques-a-co?" is the Provençal for "Qu'est-ce que cela?" The word was used satirically by Beaumarchais in his *Mémoires contre les sieurs de Goezman*. It was seized upon by the Parisian wig-makers, and applied to a head-dress introduced by Marie Antoinette.

or mythological edifices. But, as a skilful horse-woman, she delighted in the Forest of Fontainebleau, and at the palace in the graceful refinement of her boudoir the artistic skill of the age is well displayed. Upon its decoration the talent of Rousseau and Berthélemy was employed. In the centre of the parquet floor appear, from the midst of a sun, the letters "M.A.," which formed the monogram of the ill-fated queen. Tradition attributes the ironwork of one of the windows of the bedroom to the blacksmith's skill of Louis XVI. In the adjoining bedroom her bed is preserved, hung with tapestry, designed by a pupil of Boucher. The hangings were ordered at Lyons, and they were still unfinished when the Revolution broke out. More than twenty years later they were presented by the city of Lyons to Marie Louise on her marriage with the Emperor Napoleon I.

None of the French palaces exercised so peculiar a fascination for Napoleon as the "*demeure des siècles*" of Fontainebleau. The palace was refurnished and redecorated, till it was said that the wonders of Marly would have paled beside the magnificence of the imperial residence. It was here also that he lodged his royal prisoners, Charles IV of Spain in 1808, and Pope Pius VII in 1812. The pope had already visited Fontainebleau as an honoured guest. In September 1804 Napoleon had invited the pope to give by his presence the highest religious sanction to the

consecration and coronation of the first Emperor of the French. The sovereign pontiff was met at the Croix de St. Hérem, in the heart of the forest, by Napoleon on horseback, and in hunting dress. Seated on the right of the consul, escorted by a troop of Mamelukes, the representative of Catholic Christendom entered the palace, through lines of troops, and amid salvos of artillery. The pope's second visit was made under very different circumstances.

Angry discussions and disputes subsequently broke out between the emperor and the pope, which ended in Napoleon's determination to confiscate the Roman States. The Castle of St. Angelo was occupied by the French troops in 1809, and the pope was removed from Rome to Savona. There he remained till June 1812. Suddenly the emperor, then on the eve of starting for the expedition against Russia, determined to remove him to Fontainebleau. So rapidly was the removal accomplished, that the pope arrived before the orders for his reception. Refused admittance at the gates of the palace, he was lodged till the evening in a house opposite the Cour des Adieux, now the famous Hôtel de France. The house was then occupied by a dentist. Had it been the hotel, presided over by a worthy predecessor of the late Monsieur Dumaine or his widow, Pius VII would probably have preferred to remain there during the whole time of his captivity. In the palace of Fontainebleau, in the apartments still known by



his name, the pope lived for nearly eighteen months. When Napoleon returned from Russia, he charged the Bishop of Nantes to reopen negotiations with the pope on the subject of the Concordat. In January 1813 the emperor himself arrived unexpectedly in the apartments of the pope. Embracing his captive with effusive affection, he protested his filial devotion. The pope, so runs the legend, replied with the single word, "Commediante." Beside himself with fury, Napoleon stormed and threatened. In the midst of the outburst, the laconic pope murmured another single word, "Tragediante." A second interview proved more successful. At Fontainebleau, in the presence of the emperor, Marie Louise, and the whole court, the pope signed the famous Concordat on January 25, 1813.

But another year elapsed before the pope's release. His signature of the Concordat did, indeed, make a change in his position. He was allowed the attendance of his suite, and twenty-seven cardinals were lodged in the palace or the town, each with their train of attendants, and each dressed, according as they had upheld or annulled the marriage with Josephine, in black or red. Their memory yet lingers in the culinary art of preparing "les haricots du Cardinal." It was not till January 1814 that the pope was released from his captivity at Fontainebleau.

It was at Fontainebleau that Napoleon, riding with a single attendant day after day for hours

together through the forest, had brooded over and planned the divorce of Josephine. Fontainebleau had been the scene of the culmination of his audacity and pride ; it was the spot on which he had meditated his most callous act of cruelty and ingratitude. By a fitting retribution, it was destined to be also the stage on which was enacted his downfall.

Among the suite of apartments built by Louis XV, on the site of a gallery constructed in the reigns of Francis I and Henry II, is the room in which Napoleon signed his abdication on April 5, 1814. "The Allied Powers having proclaimed that the Emperor Napoleon was the sole obstacle to the re-establishment of the peace of Europe, the emperor, faithful to his oath, declares that he abandons for himself and for his heirs all claims upon the thrones of France and Italy, and that there is no personal sacrifice, including even that of his life, which he is not prepared to make in the interest of France." The writing-table on which the abdication was signed, the pen with which he wrote his name, are preserved in the room. Adjoining it is the bedroom where, on the night of April 12, as Baron Fain<sup>1</sup> relates, Napoleon attempted to commit suicide. During the retreat from Moscow Napoleon carried about with him a quantity of opium, which he had determined to

<sup>1</sup> Manuscrit de 1813, contenant le précis des événements de cette année, pour servir à l'histoire de l'empereur Napoléon. Paris, 1824-5. 2 vols. 8vo.

take sooner than fall alive into the hands of the enemy. On this night of April 12 his valet heard him get up and, looking through the half-open door, saw him mix something in a glass of water, drink it, and then go back to bed. Shortly afterwards he was seized with the most violent pains. Dr. Yvan, from whom he had procured the poison, lost his head with terror, rushed out into the courtyard, leaped on a horse which he found tethered at the gate, and dashed into the forest. Meanwhile, the emperor gradually revived ; the dose was either insufficient, or the drug had lost its strength. The next morning he had reconciled himself to life, and surrendered himself to whatever destiny his star might have in store for him.

On April 20, 1814, the emperor left Fontainebleau as a banished man. At 12 o'clock it had always been his practice to hold a review of the troops quartered at Fontainebleau. At the usual hour on this April 20 he left his room dressed in his uniform as a colonel of Chasseurs. With rapid step he descended the staircase of the great courtyard, and on the last flight paused to look quickly round him. General Petit came to the foot of the staircase to receive his orders, and a circle of officers was formed, in the centre of which stood the emperor. He raised his hand. It was the sign that he was about to speak. Every man was silent, and in the deepest stillness he began the words : " Officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers of the Old Guard, I come to bid you

farewell." Then, having finished his speech, he embraced General Petit, and, covering the eagle with kisses, he seated himself in a carriage, and drove rapidly away.

With the farewell of Napoleon I the historical charms of Fontainebleau came to an end. There is no element of poetry in the flight of Charles X, still less in that of Louis Philippe. The downfall of Napoleon III is too recent to be invested with the glamour of romance. But let the imagination wander back over the centuries of French history, and what a wealth of associations it conjures up, what dramatic scenes it re-enacts, what brilliant throngs of famous men and women it recalls to life !

As the shades of evening fall over the Cour des Adieux, and the wind sighs through the archways, the whole space is crowded with the shadowy figures of the heroes of a hundred fights, while they strain their ears to catch the hurried broken farewell of their dethroned and exiled emperor. Here is the site of the theatre where Jean-Jacques sat abashed by the presence of the brilliant society to which his eloquent theories proved so deadly a foe. In this *salon* Marshal Saxe, slumbering heavily on the *prie-dieu*, wins the heart of Maria Leczinska by the exemplary length of his prayers and confession ; in that, a gay crowd meets at the table where Madame de Pompadour dispenses her wit, her wine, and her smiles, and among them is Voltaire, clad in the blue livery of the reigning

favourite. Here is the room in which Madame de Maintenon shivered, and knitted, and read her books of devotion, and here is the council chamber where her answer to the "Qu'en pense votre Solidité?" of Louis XIV plunged Europe into twelve years of war. At the end of this long gallery, the wretched Monaldeschi implores for mercy, grovelling at the feet of the pitiless Christine of Sweden. Through this courtyard, borne by twenty liveried bearers, moves the huge red litter of Cardinal Richelieu. Here is the garden, in which Henry IV walks with his hand on the shoulder of Biron; here is the gallery, with its equestrian statue of the king, where the marshal lost by a clumsy answer his best hope of pardon; here the doorway at which he was arrested, here the pavilion to which he was hurried, and which he only left for the Bastille and the block. Through this chamber rings the voice of Coligny as he demands toleration for the Protestants. Here the stout, muddy-complexioned Catherine de Médicis walks at nightfall, asking of the stars the time when vengeance and power shall be hers. Here is the doorway through which escapes the Duchesse d'Étampes, fleeing from the revenge of her rival, Diane de Poitiers. Here is the chapel in which the fur-cloaked courtiers of St. Louis find themselves unwillingly pledged to leave France and join in the Crusades.

And on all these scenes the architecture of the palace is an eloquent commentary. It is like the

music which accompanies and explains the words. Each change in style and taste illustrates the close connection between the art and the mental or the moral character of the age. The religious awe of the middle ages, the need of defence, the anarchy of feudalism, are preserved in the crypt of St. Saturnin, and the shape of the Cour Ovale. The graceful paganism of Francis I, twining round Gothic forms, which have not wholly lost their meaning or their strength, marks the transition from the feudal to the modern world, from the ages of faith to the classicism of the Renaissance, and, by its exaggeration, often betrays the sudden passage from simple ignorance to excessive refinement. In the reign of Henry IV the harmony between painting, sculpture, and architecture, which reached their perfection under Henry II, had lost its freshness, its spontaneity, its simplicity, its ease. The object of artists is novelty; the decorations have lost their lightness, the details are vicious, the general impression is laboured, the instinctive perfection of taste is exchanged for imitation. Art, like every other department of national life, had lost its spirit in religious and civil discord. In the reign of Louis XIII it had travelled yet farther from its classic inspiration. Still more marked was its decadence under the Grand Monarque. Size, profusion, pomp, emphasis, display, characterise the gilding and the stucco, in which the achievements are celebrated of an all-powerful monarch, who makes the laws of

harmony bow to his despotic will, and whose best artistic representative is Boulle. Destruction was one keynote of the changes made by Louis XV ; where his hand is the hand of the builder or the decorator, the work is wanting in strength, and is scarcely more conspicuous for its grace and elegance than for its affectation, its whimsical caprice, its unprincipled irregularity. With the Empire stricter canons of taste and beauty were restored, the juster principles of classic art were revived, but at the sacrifice of the traditions of the past, and with the loss of its national inspiration. And, lastly, the revival of a love of antiquity, the reaction against the violence of revolution, the return of older habits of thought are displayed in the careful restorations of the Gothic revival which was inaugurated at the Restoration and was inspired by the Romantic movement of the nineteenth century.

## SOME MODERN FRENCH POETS

HOW many of the countless Englishmen and Englishwomen who read French novels ever read French poetry? The true answer probably would be—scarcely any; yet it is in verse that the finer spirit of French literature and of French national life is enshrined.

To most of us the classic school of French verse seems cold and colourless. As the *Æneid* is an echo of the *Iliad*, as Virgil in a sense copied Homer, so Racine and Corneille, borrowing form and atmosphere from the Augustan age of Roman literature, appear to be still more remote from their original, and to fail by yet another stage in producing a national school of poetry. Yet the impression is certainly mistaken. The popularity, both contemporaneous and posthumous, of the classic poets of France proves that their work exactly caught the spirit of the generations which received their verse with such rapturous applause. Some part of the secret of their fresh vitality doubtless lies in the perfection of the execution, and in the sonorous music of the language. It lies still more in their representative character. They express with infinite art the genius of the



nation, its pride of empire, its self-sacrificing patriotism, its thirst for glory, its unfaltering confidence in the favour of the silent, invisible power which controlled its destiny. They gather up into verse, not only the spirit and character of the nation, but the political tendencies, the social ideals, and the religious feelings of their age and race. The great galleries of Versailles stand untenanted and silent; the roar of its court-yards is hushed; but the ocean roll of the seventeenth-century rhythm sounds for ever of the magnanimity and imperial majesty of France in the days of the great Monarch.

In the reign of Louis XIV the imperial and poetic glories of France had culminated; under his successor both rapidly declined. To the epic grandeur of the 17th century succeeded a mock-heroic age, of which *Vert-Vert* is the literary masterpiece.

Born at Amiens in 1709, Jean Baptiste Gresset was in 1734 preparing to enter the Jesuit Order. But he had written a poem called *Vert-Vert, ou les Voyages du Perroquet de Nevers*. Through an indiscreet friend, a copy reached the press, and the poem was published. It took by storm a Parisian society which deified *la brillante bagatelle*. It also procured Gresset's temporary banishment from Paris to La Flèche. Those who have sat on an autumn day in the gardens of what is now the Prytanée, where the noise of the chestnuts breaking their husks and falling to the ground only makes the stillness more

emphatic, will sympathise with the novice in his exile. He had promised to write no more verse; but he could not refrain. The Jesuits decided that he would not adorn their Society, and Gresset left the college for the world.

*Vert-Vert* is written in the mock-heroic vein; like *The Rape of the Lock*, it is a Cupid pouting behind the shield of Achilles. The parrot was the pet of the Convent of the Visitandines at Nevers. He fed in the refectory, slept in the dormitory, and lightened the toil of the nuns with his pretty ways. He deserved the love of the Convent,<sup>1</sup>

For he a parrot was of strict devotion;  
Of wickedness he'd not the smallest notion;  
A lovely soul, in holy things well taught,  
He never harboured one immodest thought;  
But in their stead the Canticles he knew,  
*Oremuses*, and prayers, and collects not a few;  
He could recite his *Benedicite*,  
Run through "Our Mother" and "Your Charity,"  
Had even master'd some soliloquies  
And Marie Alacocque's soft reveries.

Far and wide spread the fame of *Vert-Vert's* piety. It reached the nuns of the Visitation at Nantes, who implored that the parrot might be sent to pay them a visit. On the passage-boat, which plied between Nevers and Nantes, *Vert-Vert* made his first plunge into the world. The strange talk, the blasphemy, and the oaths of his fellow-

<sup>1</sup> It seems almost certain that Gresset wrote *Vair-Vert*. The few extracts from *Vert-Vert* are quoted from a version by my mother. To her also I am indebted for those translations from Sully-Prudhomme and Coppée which are marked with an asterisk in the following pages.

passengers at first bewildered him. Then, cursing in his heart the Sisters who had concealed from him the nervous strength of the French language, he bent all the powers of his mind to the study of the new learning :

Like any trooper soon he cursed and swore,  
Mastered the myst'ries of Satanic lore,  
And quickly gave the ancient saw the lie—  
That perfect villains grow up gradually ;  
No Terms he kept, skipped ev'ry low Degree,  
And rose—a Doctor of Iniquity.

Arrived at Nantes, the parrot was received with all the honours of his reputed sanctity. But the Nuns were quickly undeceived. He disconcerted the stately Abbess, insulted one Sister, imitated the nasal twang of another, and with his appalling oaths put the whole Convent to flight. Struck dumb with horror, they fled, crossing themselves as they ran, and, thinking the Last Day was come, took refuge in the cellars. *Vert-Vert* is sent back to Nevers in disgrace. At a solemn chapter he is condemned for nine months to solitary confinement, abstinence, and silence. His exemplary conduct shortened his sentence and secured his release. But his restoration to liberty and sweetmeats was too sudden : he died of joy and excess. His remains were buried in a funeral urn, which bore the following inscription :

Ye Novice Nuns ! who to this Grove repair,  
To elder Sisters' Eyes unknown,  
One moment, if ye can, your Tongues forbear,  
And make our Woes your own.

Is Silence painful for a Space so brief?  
 Then speak! but speak of our undying Grief;  
 One Word our tender Sorrow's Cause imparts,—  
 Here *Vert-Vert* lies; and here lie all our Hearts.

The poem is the frolic of a light-hearted boy. It is also the Iliad of the early years of Louis XV. In the sparkle of the banter, in the lightness of the satire it marks the first stages of the decadence of the French monarchy and French society under the *ancien régime*. It represents the early years of decay, when beliefs were passing though habits retained their power,—when the world was losing faith in old traditions, yet rather increased the external pomp of respect than flaunted its incredulity. It embodies the period of gay infidelity, of sprightly scepticism, of religious, moral, and social *insouciance* which preceded bitter and avowed hostility to the ancient ways. Society, in the days of *Vert-Vert*, consumed its energies in a *bataille de fleurs*, in which youth and beauty pelted each other with roses that were still fresh with the morning dew. Thirty years later, the combatants were painted sirens and wrinkled satyrs whose missiles were artificial flowers, and the silvery laughter of light-heartedness had assumed the harsh and mordant note of sneering indifference.

During the closing years of the eighteenth century, poetry suffered the same changes which destroyed the political and social institutions of France. The classic school ceased to be in close touch with national ideals. Still less was it vivified

by the creative force of national genius. Its forms shrank into rigid conventions from which the spirit had departed. But the French Revolution produced no literary changes that at all corresponded to those which overthrew the foundations of social and political life. No republic of letters was built up on the ruins of the classic despotism; the aristocracy of art was not dragged to the lamp-post; the Versailles of language was not invaded by the vocabulary of the Fish-Market; the nine Muses were never forced to don the cap of liberty, or dance the Carmagnole. On the contrary, both the Convention and the Consulate affected the air and tone of Republican Rome. Nor did the Empire weaken the reign of the classic school. Its literary forms were rather cherished as distinctive of the French nationality; foreign models were proscribed; Napoleon himself aspired to see in attendance at his Court a second race of Racines and Corneilles. But even Emperors cannot raise poets by conscription.

The enforced calm was treacherous. The great upheaval of thought which accompanied the French Revolution was not fully realised until the exuberance of destructive fanaticism had subsided, and the iron despotism of the Empire had fallen. Men thought earnestly and felt intensely. They studied individuals and local differences, not general truths and universal types. The new spirit revolted against classic traditions, and claimed to represent the progress of its own epoch. Enthusiasm sup-

planted appeals to reason. To proclaim the ideal became the only philosophy. The Hebrew spirit, so to speak, overpowered that of the Greek. But during the first twenty-five years of the nineteenth century this seething mass of new ideas was confined within the classic barriers. When once the romantic movement had swept away the ancient banks, the smooth canal-like waters of classic literature were invaded by a swirling torrent of action, narrative, passion, incident. French historical writing, drama, and romance were remodelled; painting, sculpture, music obeyed the new impulse; poetry sprang into fresh life as it touched again its mother-earth in nature and religion.

Of this literary Revolution, Victor Hugo was the child, and for a time the leader. To many foreigners the vast volcanic range of his genius dominates the plain of French literature, even to the exclusion of Lamartine, whom many of his fellow-countrymen regard as a great amateur lyrist rather than as a great lyrical poet. But the lesser heights are there, each with its distinctive charm. Hugo's manifesto of the romantic principles of dramatic art seemed to his followers like the delivery of the Tables of the Law from Mount Sinai. The pale swarm of Electras and Iphigenias fled before the bearded barbarians who responded to the blast of Hernani's horn. Similarly, in the successive prefaces to the "*Odes et Ballades*" (1818-28), Hugo planted the flag of romantic

poetry ; and his "Pas d'Armes du Roi Jean" might well have been sung as the Marseillaise of the movement.

Never was a great writer, consciously or unconsciously, more completely the corridor through which passed the wind. Every phase in the changes that were transforming France is represented in his verse, as he passes from the ardent Catholic and zealous Loyalist, through the stage of the bitter satirist of Napoleon III, into the revolutionary poet and democratic prophet of Humanity. The many-sided youthful lyrist, whose impressions take their colour like iridescent bubbles from every passing object, and to whose lure love and nature came loyally as birds, did his best work in the four little volumes published during the transition period of 1830-40.<sup>1</sup> The Revolution of 1830 was the storm which scattered his autumn leaves to the wind. Sitting, as it were, under the bare boughs stripped of old associations, he seems to ask himself how much remained of the sentiments which inspired his youth. His religious and political faith was changed, but nature and home were about him still. The shadows deepened into the twilight of the second volume ; the noontide heat had parched the morning dew ; what moisture still clung to flowers had fallen from human tears. Equally representative of contemporary feeling

<sup>1</sup> "Les Feuilles d'Automne (1831) ;" "Les Chants du Crépuscule (1835) ;" "Les Voix Intérieures (1837) ;" "Les Rayons et les Ombres (1840)."

were the two next volumes. The wider outlook had brought disillusionment; a faint flush did indeed tinge the horizon, but men knew not whether it heralded the dawn of a new day, or proclaimed the evening sunset. It was an age of transition, experiment, uncertainty, which culminated in the second Empire.

Victor Hugo represents the Gothic side of the romantic movement; with him French poetry recovered, out of the neglected regions of mediæval life, her youth, her directness, her vigour, her picturesque richness. But there was also, as part of the same movement, a classic revival—a protest against the second-hand imitations of pseudo-classicism. With André Chenier poetry had drunk once more direct from the original sources of her inspiration—the pure fountains of Greek beauty. So now, with Théophile Gautier, she studied at first-hand the clear vision, exact representation, severe restraint, and statuesque simplicity of Greek art. One section of the Romanticists thus went back to the Greeks themselves; another to the “*Chansons de Gestes*” of the Middle Ages; another to nature, whether it is to be found in the rural life of Brittany or in the garrets of great cities.

Out of this union of the Revolution and the romantic movement was bred the strange phase of literary society which Henry Murger revealed to Paris in his “*Scènes de la Vie de Bohème*.” Born in 1822, Murger was too youthful to belong



to the generation of young France and the period of 1826–30. Before ten years had passed, the force of the original movement was to some extent spent or perverted. The century was no longer vocal with great ideas and noble enthusiasms. The same feeling of disenchantment which Victor Hugo expresses in lyric verse characterises Murger's work. But Murger felt only the disillusionment without ever having experienced the illusion. He had never warmed himself in the broad splashes of sunlight that preceded the grey mists of twilight. In his "*Scènes de la Vie de Bohème*" critics have found the charm of youth, its gaiety and irresponsibility. But, as it seems to me, its bursts of laughter are nervous, not hearty. It is a picture of youth which has grown old before its time, frittered away a great inheritance, and lost enthusiasm without gaining experience;—a youth which masks its wounded vanity under a cynical contempt for great causes. If any one supposes that there is genuine gaiety in the book, let him read the verse dedication which is prefixed to "*la Vie de Bohème*."

It would have been strange if Murger had been gay. Against cold and hunger, failing health, love betrayed and hope deferred he made a gallant struggle, though his courage is that of passive resistance rather than of action. Too proud to show how deeply he had felt and suffered, he checked his feelings by an irony which is often bitter. He had neither the temperament nor the

learning to see the classic gods and goddesses, or even Titania and her Court, dancing under the gaslight of the Paris streets. He could not combine Balzac with Perrault. A curious inquirer rather than a profound observer, excluded by want of education from the classic or romantic past, he painted only himself, his friends, and his surroundings, as they really were, with just that touch of idealism which was needed to give them stature and picturesqueness.

Though necessity compelled Murger to write prose for bread, poetic fame was his earliest ambition. Verse absorbed his youthful energies, and death came to him as he was preparing for the press a volume of verse called "*Nuits d'Hiver*." It is in poetry that some of his best and truest work was done. It was here that he found consolation and hope; here he reveals not only his brain but his heart; here he writes not so much for the public as for himself. In their simplicity and sincerity the best poems belong to the new era, because they express the man himself, without ornament, device, or conventionality. As in his prose, so in such verse as "*Le Testament*," irony is often the styptic which he applies to his wounds. Sometimes, as in "*La Ballade du Désespéré*," he sounds the very depths of discouragement, of desertion, of receding hope. More often the tone of the poems is tenderly elegiac. Charged with a wistful regret for the past, his verse is, so to speak, a reliquary in

which he lays the ashes of his loves, real or ideal, and the memories of his departed dreams. In the two poems which follow, the mournful note is struck. Both belong to our early-Victorian age in sentiment, and suggest a parallel with the manner of Tennyson's youthful verse. In "Ma Mie Annette" he expresses the pain of the contrast between the hopes and the cruelties of life. In "Étrennes" he affects to hide the sense of failure under the transparent veil of raillery.

Some apology is needed for translations. When all the world reads French, is not the attempt to render French into English almost an impertinence? Such a question must be present to the mind of every translator who recognises the difficulty of the task and the failure in the performance. But thousands who read French prose with ease do not read French verse with that facility which is essential to enjoyment. Apart from this, the prejudice against French poetry is widespread. It is too often supposed to be either frigid, or unwholesome, or absorbed in the dexterous practice of the art. The truth is that the poetry of our neighbours is full of passion, of tender purity, and the determination to draw its inspiration from human life. How can this truth be brought home to English readers? Only, as it seems to me, by English renderings. It is in the hope that some may be tempted to seek the charm, finish, and grace of French poetry in its

own language that these imperfect versions are offered.

### MY LOVE ANNETTE

Awake! my love Annette, I pray!  
Be sure your smartest gown to wear;  
They keep our own Saint's Feast to-day,  
And all the countryside is there.

Our Jacqueline her peal has rung  
From the old tower at break of day;  
"The Patron's mass will soon be sung,  
Come all, come quick," it seems to say.  
The priest is waiting, quick! away!  
Let's hasten on, Annette my dear;  
If we're away when mass they say,  
There's One above will drop a tear.

Awake! my love Annette, I pray!  
Be sure your smartest gown to wear;  
They keep our own Saint's Feast to-day,  
And all the countryside is there.

Each house its banner gaily flings  
Upon the street, with nosegays bright  
Festooned; from ev'ry window rings  
The merry shout of laughter light:  
They're sitting there, the grandsires old,  
They pass the cup and eager chat  
Of days when youth and love were bold,  
And him who wore the small cocked-hat.

### MA MIE ANNETTE

Réveillez-vous, ma mie Annette,  
Et mettez vos plus beaux habits;  
C'est aujourd'hui grand jour de  
fête,  
Le jour de fête du pays.

La Jacqueline matinale,  
En branle dans le vieux clocher,  
Sonne la messe patronale  
Et nous dit de nous dépêcher.  
Allons, ma mie, allons plus vite,  
Monsieur le curé nous attend.  
Sans nous si la messe était dite,  
Le bon Dieu serait mécontent.

Réveillez-vous, ma mie Annette,  
Et mettez vos plus beaux habits;  
C'est aujourd'hui grand jour de  
fête,  
Le jour de fête du pays.

Chaque maison est pavoisée  
De drapeaux flottants et de fleurs,  
Et l'on entend par la croisée  
Sortir de joyeuses clameurs:  
Ce sont les anciens du village  
Qui devisent, autour d'un pot,  
Des vieux amours de leur jeune  
âge  
Et de l'homme au petit chapeau.

Awake ! my love Annette, I pray !  
 Be sure your smartest gown to wear ;  
 They keep our own Saint's Feast to-day,  
 And all the countryside is there.

When Evensong is duly said,  
 Together arm in arm we'll go,  
 Together we'll the meadows tread,  
 And where the woodlands thickly grow ;  
 We'll loiter back by the Venelle,  
 Where elder flowers, like flakes of snow,  
 Their wild sharp fragrance blend so well  
 With grass the scythe has just laid low.

Awake ! my love Annette, I pray !  
 Be sure your smartest gown to wear ;  
 They keep our own Saint's Feast to-day,  
 And all the countryside is there.

The grey-haired piper there you'll see,  
 Swelling his cheeks his pipes to play ;  
 He'll make us by the chestnut tree  
 Dance all the Feast's last hours away ;  
 And ev'ry lass, or dark or fair,  
 Pretty or plain, will have her chance ;  
 Some sweetheart, old or young, will dare  
 This night to claim her for the dance.

Awake ! my love Annette, I pray !  
 Be sure your smartest gown to wear ;  
 They keep our own Saint's Feast to-day,  
 And all the countryside is there.

Réveillez-vous, ma mie Annette,  
 Et mettez vos plus beaux habits ;  
 C'est aujourd'hui grand jour de  
     fête,  
 Le jour de fête du pays.

Après les vêpres et complies,  
 Bras dessus des sous, nous irons  
 Nous promener dans les prairies  
 Et dans les bois des environs ;  
 Nous reviendrons par la Venelle,  
 Où neige la fleur des sureaux,  
 Dont la sauvage odeur se mêle  
 Avec l'odeur des foin nouveaux.

Réveillez-vous, ma mie Annette,  
 Et mettez vos plus beaux habits ;

C'est aujourd'hui grand jour de fête,  
 Le jour de fête du pays.

Comme une outre enfant sa  
     musette,  
 Ce soir, le vieux ménétrier  
 Fera, pour terminer la fête,  
 Danser sous le grand marronnier.  
 Et, laide ou belle, blonde ou brune,  
 Qu'il soit laid ou beau, jeune ou  
     vieux,  
 Pour la faire danser chacune  
 Saura trouver un amoureux.

Réveillez-vous, ma mie Annette,  
 Et mettez vos plus beaux habits ;  
 C'est aujourd'hui grand jour de  
     fête,  
 Le jour de fête du pays.

Annette! Annette! I call in vain!  
 Last year, the yellow sheaves among,  
 Ah God! how memory turns to pain!  
 I heard her sing her last sweet song,—  
 And the last time I saw my love  
 Pass from the threshold of her door,  
 A white sheet lay her face above  
 And to her home she came no more.

My little love! how hard and cold  
 That pillow where her head she's laid!  
 What shrouded sleep her eyelids hold!  
 Annette will never wake again.

Hélas! mon Dieu, je me rappelle  
 Que l'an dernier, à la moisson,  
 Celle qu'en vain ma voix appelle  
 Chanta sa dernière chanson.  
 De sa maison quand je l'ai vue  
 Pour la dernière fois sortir,

Elle était d'un drap blanc vêtue  
 Et ne devait pas revenir;  
 Car ma pauvre petite amie,  
 Sur un froid et dur oreiller,  
 Depuis longtemps est endormie  
 Et ne peut pas se réveiller

### NEW YEAR'S GIFTS

Past is the time for us and far away  
 When life seemed full of all things fair and fine;  
 But I remember our glad childhood's day,  
 Have you forgotten, Angèle, cousin mine?

How long ago it was! and one by one  
 The passing years have touched us with their spell;  
 The fairhaired gladness and the laughter's sun  
 Alas! have fled, Oh cousin mine, Angèle!

#### A MA COUSINE ANGÈLE

##### ETRENNES

Nous avons tous les deux laissé  
 derrière nous  
 Une époque où la vie est bien bonne  
 et bien belle;  
 Je m'en souviens encor, vous en  
 souvenez-vous  
 De notre enfance heureuse?—ô ma  
 cousine Angèle!

Ils sont bien loin ces jours, et déjà  
 bien des fois  
 Les ans nous ont touchés en passant  
 de leur aile;  
 Et notre gaité blonde aux grands  
 éclats de voix  
 Hélas! s'est envolée,—ô ma cousine  
 Angèle!

Wild scholars we, when, tedious school-hours flown,  
 We danced to that old tune, with whirling feet,  
 "To the woods we'll go no longer, the laurels are  
     cut down."

We go no longer to the woods, Angèle, my cousin  
 sweet !

Happier than I, it was not yours to part  
 From home ; still doth your Mother's voice enshrine  
 Whate'er is holiest within your heart ;  
 I've lost that treasure, Angèle, cousin mine !

Your daily labour proves a constant friend ;  
 At night pure angels their white wings incline  
 To shield from harm, and blessed dreams descend  
 From heaven upon you, Angèle, cousin mine !

Your voice is like your name, so soft in sound ;  
 The soul of goodness do your eyes declare ;  
 Your sixteen years a fragrance breathe around  
 Of flowering youth—Oh ! Angèle, cousin fair !

In olden days how joyously I flew,  
 At earliest morning of the glad New Year,  
 I squeezed my purse to find a gift for you !  
 Poor trifle was it, Angèle, cousin dear !

Ecoliers turbulents de la classe  
 échappés,  
 Pour danser en chantant l'antique  
 ritournelle :

"Nous n'irons plus aux bois, les  
 lauriers sont coupés,"  
 Nous n'irons plus aux bois,—ô ma  
 cousine Angèle !

Plus heureuse que moi, vous n'avez  
 pas quitté

Le foyer de famille, et la voix  
 maternelle

Conserve à votre cœur la sainte  
 piété

Qui n'est plus dans le mien,—ô ma  
 cousine Angèle !

Vous avez le travail pour com-  
 pagnon le jour,

La nuit un ange blanc vous couvre  
 de son aile,

Et des songes bénis descendent  
 tour à tour  
 Du ciel à votre lit,—ô ma cousine  
 Angèle !

Votre parole est douce ainsi que  
 votre nom ;  
 L'esprit de la bonté dans vos yeux  
 se révèle,

Et vos seize ans fleuris embaument  
 la maison  
 D'un parfum de jeunesse,—ô ma  
 cousine Angèle !

Autrefois, quand venait le jour de  
 l'an nouveau,  
 Selon le contenu de ma pauvre  
 escarcelle

J'arrivais tout joyeux vous offrir  
 mon cadeau,

Qui ne coûtait pas cher,—ô ma  
 cousine Angèle !

But since those days the devil, as men say,  
 Dwells in my purse, and Plutus will not hear;  
 He's deaf as well as blind, and when I pray  
 He answers not—Angèle, my cousin dear!

I bring no gift to celebrate the day—  
 No brilliant keepsake where rich gems entwine,  
 No casket chased in great Cellini's way,  
 No sugared bonbons, Angèle, cousin mine!

I press your hand, a gift you may receive—  
 I kiss your brow, a brother's love to tell—  
 And these poor verses—long before the eve,  
 They'll be forgotten, cousin mine Angèle!

Mais depuis ce temps-là le diable,  
 comme on dit,  
 S'est logé dans ma bourse, et  
 vainement j'appelle  
 Plutus, l'aveugle dieu, que je crois  
 sourd aussi,  
 Car il ne m'entend pas,—ô ma  
 cousine Angèle!

Donc, vous n'aurez de moi nul  
 présent aujourd'hui,  
 Ni keepsake éclatant, ni riche  
 bagatelle,

Ni bijou ciselé par quelque Cellini,  
 Et ni bonbons sucrés,—ô ma  
 cousine Angèle!

Vous n'aurez rien de moi qu'un  
 serrement de main,  
 Ou qu'un baiser au front,—étrenne  
 fraternelle,

Et puis ces pauvres vers que, ce  
 soir ou demain,  
 Vous oublierez sans doute,—ô ma  
 cousine Angèle!

Murger, as we have seen, faithfully represented the disenchantment of his generation; yet he never yielded to some of its chief literary faults. Always a conscientious artist, he allowed no work to pass his hands unfinished. Few of his contemporaries had exercised the same restraint. Not only were freedom and directness discredited by the exaggeration of imitators, but a gush of elegiac sentimentality had watered emotion down to weakness and turned the gaiety of France into spurious mourning. All the world wept, without genuine feeling, without respect for art, and without regard to form. Phœbus Apollo had lost



his wings, and as he shuffled in slippers down the Champs Elysées, he snivelled like an ordinary citizen. It had become almost a canon of the so-called school of common sense that strong feeling could only be expressed in weak rhymes or real emotion in bad grammar; that there could be neither genius without false syntax, nor passion without imperfect prosody. It was against the maudlin tenderness and slatternly appearance of French poetry that in 1841 Théodore de Banville raised a protest.

In the spring of that year a lad of eighteen rang at the house of Alfred de Vigny, and, blushing like a girl, thrust a book into the hands of the servant; then vanished down the street as fast as his legs could carry him, overwhelmed with shame at his own audacity. Now running, now walking, only stopping to light the cigarettes which he smoked with feverish vehemence, he made for the open country as if pursued by the naked swords of avenging deities. At night, slipping through the streets like a thief, he returned home, to find Alfred de Vigny's card, covered with pencilled congratulations. The lad was Théodore de Banville; the book was "*Les Cariatides*," the volume of poems which first made him famous.

Banville takes his inspiration from the Renaissance. He is its Primaticcio in verse, and his work reveals the skill of an artist in delicately tinted bas-reliefs or arabesques. He is the reviver

of forgotten metres, and disused rhythms,—the poet, not only of classic measures, but of the rondels, triolets, sonnets, and *ballades* which were the natural growth of French soil. In the form and manner of poetry, he is a great artist. Among a number of words expressing the same order of idea he distinguishes, with unerring insight, the one which most definitely conveys his exact shade of meaning. He chooses the rhyme which makes most perfect symphony in sound with the desired impression. He feels, and conveys to others, a sensuous pleasure from the collocation of words, loves them for their own sake, the charm of their syllables, the enchantment of their colour, or their grace of movement, and he groups them so as to produce the richest possible effect. In his skilful hands the metre adapts itself to the sense, not as though it were a slave bound to obey thought, but as if it was a divine master, at whose bidding words and ideas moulded themselves into harmonious order. He can make his verse an Amazon in a corselet of steel, a nymph babbling softly by a brook, even a dancer balancing on the tight-rope. One thing only he was determined she should not become,—a citizen's wife plastered with jewellery.

If Banville's matter had been equal to his manner, he would unquestionably have been a great poet; but his substance is so inferior to his form that he cannot take this rank. Human sympathy is wanting; his enthusiasms are verbal,

his passions artistic, his emotions æsthetic. He is lavish of romantic allusions, because of the colour and richness which they lend to his verse, and not because he values the high ideals of feudal honour that underlie the coarseness of feudal manners. Even the classic past is to him poetic furniture, and it is as literary stock-in-trade that he prizes the gods and goddesses of Olympus. His poetry represents the divinities of Greece and Rome dwelling in the marble halls of the Italian Renaissance, their golden tresses decked with roses, clothed in purple and crimson, gleaming with topaz and amethyst. Not content with tinting his Venuses, he presents them in polychrome.

It may not be altogether fanciful to trace Banville's peculiar temperament to the characteristics of the town and province to which both his parents belonged, and in which his own childhood was passed. The natural wealth of the Bourbonnais, with its fat meadows, cattle, vineyards, and fruit gardens, contributes something distinctive to his artistic equipment. The pride of Moulins is the famous tomb of the Constable of Montmorency, which, by its mixture of Christian aspirations with pagan mythology and by the perfection of its sculptured figures, is an epitome in stone of the exquisite finish and Renaissance incongruities of Banville's verse. The temperament of the inhabitants—apparently indifferent, loving fairs and holidays, eschewing definite statements,

avoiding decisive answers, translating grief and regret into their characteristic provincial equivalent of *mautemps*—resembles in much the optimistic temperament of Banville. He thinks and feels and sees lyrically. To the day of his death he unconsciously shuts his ears to the sound of misery, and hears again the sonorous strokes of Jacquemart and his wife, the famous bells which regulated from the Tour d'Horloge the easy lives of the citizens of Moulins. With no conscious effort of will he closes his eyes to contemporary realities, and sees once more Font-Georges, with its white vine-clad house and moss-covered spring, where the songs and bats of washerwomen made cheerful music, while he played with his sister Zélie and her dog Calliste.

A poet who depends so much on his mastery of the technicalities of his art, and whose form and workmanship excel the material, does not easily lend himself to translation. To foreigners, who are quicker to appreciate excellence of matter than excellence of manner, those poems which are inspired by some simple natural feeling are most attractive. But this is the smaller side of his work, and not, perhaps, that which most appealed to his own fellow-countrymen.

As examples of the most human and the least artificial sides of his poetry, the three following poems may be taken. The first is suggested by the old nursery ballad, the refrain of which haunted Murger and fascinated George Sand: 'Nous

n'irons plus au bois, les lauriers sont coupés." The second is inspired by the deepest feeling of his life—love for his mother, to whom, twice a year, on her birthday and her saint's-day, he wrote a poem; the lines which follow were written after her death and on the anniversary of her birthday. The third rings less true: if the grief is real, it is turned to literary account.

### TO THE WOODS, ETC.

To the woods we'll go no longer; the laurels are laid  
low.  
The Cupids by their founts of stone, the Naiads in a  
row,  
Watch the waters in the sunshine, each wave with  
diamonds hemmed,  
Which once in silent streamlets from their urns were  
wont to flow.  
The laurels are cut down; at bay the stag in covert low  
Hears the hunter's horn and trembles; to the woods we  
may not go,  
Where of old the merry children went running to and  
fro,  
None watching save the lilies, each with heaven's own  
tears begemmed;  
They have left the laurels lying,—the waving grass they  
mow,  
To the woods we'll go no longer; the laurels are laid  
low.

Nous n'irons plus au bois, les  
lauriers sont coupés.  
Les Amours des bassins, les  
Naiades en groupe  
Voient reluire au soleil en cristaux  
découpés  
Les flots silencieux qui coulaient  
de leur coupe.  
Les lauriers sont coupés, et le cerf  
aux abois

Tressaille au son du cor; nous  
n'irons plus au bois,  
Où des enfants charmants riait la  
folle troupe  
Sous les regards des lys aux pleurs  
du ciel trempés,  
Voici l'herbe qu'on fauche et les  
lauriers qu'on coupe.  
Nous n'irons plus au bois, les  
lauriers sont coupés.

## TO HIS MOTHER

Once more I turn these leaves—'twas thy wish spoke ;  
 As one too roughly roused, I, trembling, woke :  
 All our dear mem'ries, with their gentle strain,  
 Revive my saddened faith, my lengthened pain,  
 And, conflict-shattered, yet with victor's tread,  
 I bring these fragments where my heart has bled.

Then pray ! No bar can stand our hearts between ;  
 Prayer re-unites us as we once have been,  
 Prayer wings its flight o'er countless heavenly plains ;  
 The blood of Jesus flows and nought disdains.  
 Oh ! tell me, where on high blest spirits soar,  
 'Tis thou wilt clasp me in thy arms once more :  
 'Tis thou, when all our woes are lost in bliss,  
 Wilt press again upon my brow thy kiss ;  
 And then—sweet hope—our bitter anguish past,  
 My angel-mother ! we shall live at last.

## A CELLE QUI ME VOIT

Tu le voulais, hélas ! j'ai relu ces  
 feuillets.  
 Comme si tout à coup, tremblant,  
 je m'éveillais,  
 Tous nos chers souvenirs dont la  
 douceur m'attire  
 Ont ravivé ma foi triste, mon long  
 martyre,  
 Et comme un combattant déchiré,  
 mais vainqueur,  
 J'apporte ces lambeaux tout saign-  
 nants de mon cœur.  
 Prions ! comme entre nous il  
 n'est pas de barrière,  
 Nous sommes réunis déjà par la  
 Prière

Qui franchit mille cieux d'un vol  
 aérien.

Le sang de Jésus coule et ne  
 dédaigne rien !

Oh ! dis-le, que parmi les éthers  
 emplis d'ailes

C'est toi qui me prendras entre tes  
 bras fidèles,

Qu'alors nous sentirons tous nos  
 maux s'apaiser,

Qu'heureuse, tu mettras sur mon  
 front ton baiser,

Et qu'enfin délivrés de toute  
 angoisse amère,

Nous vivrons, ô mon Ange, ô mon  
 espoir, ma mère !

## THE BELOVED

They are saying, O my dove !  
 That in death thou dreamest still ;  
 Underneath the graveyard stone  
 Thou canst wake thyself at will,  
 Live again once more to be  
 Full of thought and love for me.

## L'ÉNAMOUREE

Ils se disent, ma colombe,  
 Que tu rêves, morte encore,

Sous la pierre d'une tombe :  
 Mais pour l'âme qui t'adore,  
 Tu t'éveilles ranimée,  
 O pensive bien-aimée !

When the star-lit night grows pale,  
 And the wind goes murmuring by,  
 Then I kiss thy long white veil,  
 And thy soft hair floating nigh,  
 While thy shadowy half-closed wing  
 O'er the rose is hovering.

I breathe once more—Oh! blessedness!  
 The fragrance of each golden tress,  
 While thy pure voice, in lyric song,  
 Above the wavelets sweeps along;  
 The wavelets answer to that tone,  
 Which swanlike makes its plaintive moan.

Par les blanches nuits d'étoiles,  
 Dans la brise qui murmure,  
 Je caresse tes longs voiles,  
 Ta mouvante chevelure,  
 Et tes ailes demi-closes  
 Qui voltigent sur les roses!

O délices! je respire  
 Tes divines tresses blondes!  
 Ta voix pure, cette lyre,  
 Suit la vague sur les ondes,  
 Et, suave, les effleure,  
 Comme un cygne qui se pleure!

It is as a master of his craft that Banville takes his place by the side of Victor Hugo and Théophile Gautier, as one of the great influences on modern French poetry. The newer school of poets were called by various names, but were best known as Parnassians. They accepted the precepts of his "Petit Traité de la Poésie," and insisted on scrupulous obedience to the rules of prosody, on precision, clearness of outline, exactitude of detail, variety of rhythmical movement. Virtuosos of all that was rare and exquisite in style, sybarites who could not endure a crumpled rose-leaf in the couch of the Muse, they adored their art with the passion of a lover for his mistress. A word robbed Baudelaire, the Brummel of literary dandyism, of sleep for a night; a phrase for a week; a page for a month: a volume deprived

him of reason and life. But who can say that, even in this excess of worship of form, they were entirely wrong? The clear-cut effigy on some disinterred coin reveals the features of a ruler whose existence history has forgotten; the sculptured marble outlives the city whose palaces it once adorned. Yet even these are impaired by age. The clear-cut sculptured phrase alone survives time and defies decay.

No single current has of recent years swept French poetry towards any definite goal. The directions in which it has been carried by the tide are many; yet it has never failed to keep in close touch with human nature over an ever-widening range. No French poets have imitated the example of Walt Whitman, whose "barbaric yawp" spurns the artistic progress of the ages. On the contrary, they have steadily laboured to perfect the instrument, to adapt it to the progress of the century, and have relied on the accumulated resources of inherited and expanded art to give expression to modern ideas.

Among a crowd of versifiers it is difficult to make a selection, but perhaps the finest representative of the Gothic and classic sides of the romantic movement, as they are controlled by realism and disciplined by art, is Leconte de Lisle. He stood in a place apart from his contemporaries. He dwelt remote from everyday life, for his subjects were chiefly taken from the distant past; but in his nervous, vigorous verse



he caught the very spirit of bygone ages. His pictures are firmly drawn with the fewest possible strokes, all concentrated with singular restraint upon the effect which he wishes to produce. The first two of the following poems are taken from his "Poèmes Barbares"; the last two from his "Poèmes Antiques."

## THE HEART OF HIALMAR

Clear is the night and cold; blood-red the snow;  
Unburied there a thousand heroes lie,  
Wild-eyed, with sword fast gripped; none stirs below,  
But high o'erhead the circling ravens cry.

The distant moon looks down with cold pale glance;  
Hialmar rises midst the bleeding dead,  
Leans with both hands upon his shivered lance,  
While his torn sides the crimson war-tide shed.

—Holla! is no one left with breath or voice?  
Where are the stalwart youths, so gay of mien,  
Whose shout and laugh this morn bade all rejoice,  
Like blackbirds' song in spring when leaves are green?

They all are silent; shattered is my helm;  
My armour cleft where crashed the axe's blow;  
My eyes weep blood. Strange sounds my ears o'erwhelm,—  
Is't ocean's roar or wolves who scent their foe?

## LE CŒUR DE HIALMAR

Une nuit claire, un vent glacé. La  
neige est rouge.  
Mille braves sont là qui dorment  
sans tombeaux,  
L'épée au poing, les yeux hagards.  
Pas un ne bouge.  
Au-dessus tourne et crie un vol de  
noirs corbeaux.

La lune froide verse au loin sa  
pâle flamme.  
Hialmar se soulève entre les morts  
sanglants,  
Appuyé des deux mains au tronçon  
de sa lame.  
La pourpre du combat ruisselle de  
ses flancs.

—Holà! Quelqu'un a-t-il encore  
un peu d'haleine,  
Parmi tant de joyeux et robustes  
garçons  
Qui, ce matin, riaient et chantaient  
à voix pleine  
Comme des merles dans l'épaisseur  
des buissons?

Tous sont muets. Mon casque est  
rompu, mon armure  
Est trouée, et la hache a fait sauter  
ses clous.  
Mes yeux saignent. J'entends un  
immense murmure  
Pareil aux hurlements de la mer ou  
des loups.

Friend raven come ! who mak'st of men thy prey,  
 My breast with iron beak tear wide apart,—  
 Thou'lt find *us* here to-morrow as to-day,—  
 To Ylmer's daughter bear my still warm heart.

To Upsal, where the Jarls quaff foaming mead,  
 And sing and clash gold goblets in their pride,  
 Fly ! wand'rer of the heath with arrowy speed,  
 And bear my heart to my affianced bride.

On that tall tower, round which the jackdaws wing,  
 Thou'lt see her standing, pale with long black hair,  
 Each slender ear clipped with a silver ring,  
 And eyes more bright than stars when heav'n is bare.

Tell her, dark messenger, how well I loved ;  
 Lay at her feet my heart, that she may see  
 How red and firm, not pale and weak, it proved ;  
 Then, raven, Ylmer's child will smile on thee.

Through twenty wounds my spirit flits. I die.  
 I've lived my time. Haste, wolves, your thirst to slake !  
 Young, brave, unscarred, and free, in the Sun's eye  
 My seat among the Gods I rise to take.

Viens par ici, Corbeau, mon brave  
 mangeur d'hommes !  
 Ouvre-moi la poitrine avec ton bec  
 de fer.

Tu nous retrouveras demain tels  
 que nous sommes.

Porte mon cœur tout chaud à la  
 fille d'Ylmer.

Dans Upsal, où les Jarls boivent la  
 bonne bière,  
 Et chantent, en heurtant les  
 cruches d'or, en chœur,  
 A tire d'aile vole, ô rôdeur de  
 bruyère !

Cherche ma fiancée et porte-lui  
 mon cœur.

Au sommet de la tour que hantent  
 les corneilles

Tu la verras debout, blanche, aux  
 longs cheveux noirs.

Deux anneaux d'argent fin lui  
 pendent aux oreilles,  
 Et ses yeux sont plus clairs que  
 l'astre des beaux soirs.

Va, sombre messenger, dis-lui bien  
 que je l'aime,  
 Et que voici mon cœur. Elle  
 reconnaitra

Qu'il est rouge et solide et non  
 tremblant et blême ;  
 Et la fille d'Ylmer, Corbeau, te  
 sourira !

Moi, je meurs. Mon esprit coule  
 par vingt blessures.  
 J'ai fait mon temps. Buvez, ô  
 loups, mon sang vermeil.

Jeune, brave, riant, libre et sans  
 flétrissures,

Je vais m'asseoir parmi les Dieux,  
 dans le soleil !

## THE DEATH OF THE SUN

The autumn wind, like moan of distant seas,  
Full of sad partings and of griefs unknown,  
Sways mournfully through avenues of trees;  
Red on their trunks thy blood, oh Sun! is thrown.

In clouds dead leaves are whirling through the air;  
Towards the stream, where rosy wavelets creep,  
Great nests bend down, as evening woos to sleep,  
All crimson-stained among the branches bare.

Fall, glorious Star! of day the source and beam!  
From thy heart's wound the golden fountains flow,  
As from some glorious breast pours love supreme.

Die! thou wilt live again, we surely know;  
But who will life and fire and voice restore  
To broken hearts, that break for evermore?

## LA MORT DU SOLEIL

Le vent d'automne, aux bruits  
lointains des mers pareil,  
Plein d'adieux solennels, de  
plaintes inconnues,  
Balance tristement le long des  
avenues  
Les lourds massifs rougis de ton  
sang, ô soleil!

La feuille en tourbillons s'envole  
par les nues;  
Et l'on voit osciller, dans un fleuve  
vermeil,  
Aux approches du soir inclinés au  
sommeil,

De grands nids teints de pourpre  
au bout des branches nues.

Tombe, Astre glorieux, source et  
flambeau du jour!

Ta gloire en nappes d'or coule de  
ta blessure,

Comme d'un sein puissant tombe  
un suprême amour.

Meurs donc, tu renaîtras! L'es-  
pérance en est sûre.

Mais qui rendra la vie et la flamme  
et la voix

Au cœur qui s'est brisé pour la  
dernière fois?

## NIGHT

Upon the mountain's slope the breezes rest,  
Wooing to sleep the gently waving trees;  
The hush'd bird slumbers on her dewy nest;  
Stars turn to gold the foam of azure seas.

## NOX

Sur la pente des monts les brises  
apaisées  
Inclinent au sommeil les arbres  
onduleux;

L'oiseau silencieux s'endort dans  
les rosées,

Et l'étoile a doré l'écume des flot  
bleus.

Along the deep ravines, and round each height,  
Soft clinging vapours ev'ry track efface;  
Sadly on foliage dark the moonbeams light;  
No sound of human life the ear can trace.

The godlike sea sings on the sands afar;  
And the great voices of the forest groan;  
To starlit skies, borne on the tuneful air,  
Rise the sea's music and the forest's moan.

Ye holy sounds, ye sacred words, uprise!  
Oh! converse calm and pure 'twixt earth and heav'n  
Ascend! and ask the stars with radiant eyes  
If to attain their height some path be giv'n.

Oh! seas, oh! dreamy woods! Earth's tones of prayer!  
You answered me, when evil days were long;  
Your magic wiled me from my black despair,  
And in my heart for ever rings your song.

Au contour des ravins, sur les hanteurs sauvages,	Montez, saintes rumeurs, paroles surhumaines,
Une molle vapeur efface les chemins;	Entretien lent et doux de la terre et du ciel!
La lune tristement baigne les noirs feuillages;	Montez, et demandez aux étoiles sereines
L'oreille n'entend plus les mur- mures humains.	S'il est pour les atteindre un chemin éternel.
Mais sur le sable au loin chante la mer divine,	O mers, ô bois songeurs, voix pieuses du monde,
Et des hautes forêts gémit la grande voix,	Vous m'avez répondu durant mes jours mauvais,
Et l'air sonore, aux cieux que la nuit illumine,	Vous avez apaisé ma tristesse inféconde,
Porte le chant des mers et le sonpir des bois.	Et dans mon cœur aussi vous chantez à jamais!

## LYDIA

Youth leaves us, and each ling'ring grace departs,  
And Love's sweet longings also pass away,  
And easy sleep. Why need we vex our hearts  
For some Eternal Day?

### LYDIE.

La jeunesse nous quitte, et les Grâces aussi.	Et le sommeil facile. A quoi bon le sonci
Les désires amoureux s'envolent avec elles,	Des Espérances éternelles!

Old Saturn bears our best years on his wing,  
 And flowers the wind has wooed all fade at eve.  
 Come, taste beneath the pine grove's shadowing  
     What Love and Life may leave.

Let us our snowy locks with roses crown,  
 Drink! we have time, yet dare we not delay;  
 All cares, oh Bacchus! in thy cup to drown  
     Is still the wisest way!

Boy! cool the wines in yonder bubbling spring,  
 Make Lydia come with her enchanting smile,  
 Her silver lyre, and ringlets clustering  
     Tied in Laconian style.

L'aile du vieux Saturne emporte  
     nos beaux jours,  
 Et la fleur inclinée au vent du  
     soir se fane;  
 Viens à l'ombre des pins ou sous  
     l'épais platane  
     Goûter les tardives amours.  
 Ceignons nos cheveux blancs de  
     couronnes de roses;  
 Buvons, il en est temps encore,  
     hâtons-nous!

Ta liqueur, ô Bacchus, des tris-  
     tesses moroses  
     Est le remède le plus doux.  
 Enfant, trempe les vins dans la  
     source prochaine,  
 Et fais venir Lydie aux rires  
     enjoués,  
 Avec sa blanche lyre et ses  
     cheveux noués  
     A la mode Laconienne.

After the death of Leconte de Lisle, Sully-Prudhomme, who was born in 1839, and died in September of last year, was recognised as the first of French poets. Compelled in early life by a severe attack of ophthalmia to give up the engineering profession, he eventually decided to adopt literature as his pursuit. An ardent student of science and philosophy, a disciple and translator of Lucretius, he seems never to have forgotten the workshops of Le Creusot. He has two different styles, which are distinct, yet perpetually touch each other; the style of youth (1855-78); the other that of maturer life. Even in his youthful verse he shows that microscopic insight into the depths

of human consciousness which compensates for much that is repulsive in the pathological school of poetry. The secrets which he finds are the secrets of all the world, and they are expressed with an accuracy and a lightness of touch which heal the wounds that they re-open. Few poets have been able to finger those tender chords without breaking them; but Sully's touch is so true and tender that, as it were, he caresses them into music.

His own life is in his verse, and it is the knowledge that other lives besides his own are there expressed which enables him to strike the hidden chords of the heart with unerring truth. He achieves the task that he sets himself in the description which he gives of his verse in the lines "To Unknown Friends" (*Aux Amis inconnus*).

\* One line may, like a friend who knows us well,  
Re-ope the wound whose smart is not forgot;  
The word that doth another's sufferings tell  
May drop, like tears, on our own anguish'd spot,  
Where hearts misjudged await their soothing spell.

My verse, perchance, may reach you and restore,  
With lightning flash, the sleeping grief of old,  
Or by that one true word—long waited for—  
The sudden name of all you feel unfold,  
Nor tell the eyes from whom I learnt my lore.

Parfois un vers, complice intime,  
vient rouvrir  
Quelque plaie où le feu désire  
qu'on l'attise;  
Parfois un mot, le nom de ce qui  
fait souffrir,  
Tombe comme une larme à la  
place précise  
Où le cœur méconnu l'attendait  
pour guérir.

Peut-être un de mes vers est-il  
venu vous rendre  
Dans un éclair brûlant vos cha-  
grins tout entiers,  
Ou, par le seul vrai mot qui se  
faisait attendre,  
Vous ai-je dit le nom de ce que  
vous sentiez,  
Sans vous nommer les yeux où  
j'avais dû l'apprendre.

## TO THE READER.

\* These flowers I gathered by the highway side,  
 Where fate, for good and ill, has cast my days,  
 I dare not give them wild and loosely tied;  
 I'll twine them in a wreath—to earn more praise.

Still fresh, a rose is weeping tear on tear;  
 A pansy lifts her eyes of purple hue;  
 Then the calm lilies, dreamers of the mere,  
 And budding corn—and there my life lies too.

And thine too, reader—is't not even so?  
 One fate is always ours in joy or woe—  
 To weep Love's tears and think, but never know  
 How we have lost in dreaming spring's best day,  
 Then comes the hour when we would rise from play,  
 And plant some seed before we pass away.

## AU LECTEUR

J'avais cueilli ces fleurs sur le  
 bord de la route  
 Où m'out jeté les bons et les  
 mauvais hasards,  
 Mais je n'osais livrer des souvenirs  
 épars;  
 J'en fais une guirlande, ils plairont  
 mieux sans doute.

Fraîche encore, une rose y pleure  
 goutte à goutte;  
 J'y mets une pensée aux téné-  
 breux regards,

Puis les plantes des lacs, de  
 rêveurs nénuphars,  
 Puis des épis naissants: ma vie  
 y sera toute.  
 La tienne aussi, lecteur, car les  
 hommes entre eux  
 Sont en cela pareils, qu'heureux  
 ou malheureux,  
 Ils ont pleuré d'amour et pensé  
 sans connaître,  
 Qu'ils ont au moins perdu vingt  
 printemps à rêver,  
 Et qu'enfin tous un jour ont  
 voulu se lever  
 Et semer quelque chose avant de  
 disparaître.

His tone even in youth is uniformly autumnal, rarely vernal; his songs are full of sighs; deep springs of wistful regret well up through the mournful lines, which express memories rather than hopes. No French poet has depicted more sadly or more simply the melancholy and dissatisfaction to which all thoughtful minds are subject. Quiet in manner, reserved, fastidious, scrupulously sincere,

delicate and even dainty in his refinement, he is in many ways a French Matthew Arnold. But his poetry is founded on a wide and true sympathy, which makes him the most companionable of French poets.

Almost from the first the work showed a tendency towards the more austere manner of his later life. Ambitious to seek the poetic impulse at higher levels of thought than those which satisfied his contemporaries, he felt that poetry could not, without loss of its robustness and its manhood, stand aside from philosophy and science, and from the revolutions of thought which they have effected. It was his dream to be a nineteenth-century Lucretius, a Schopenhauer or a Darwin of poetry; yet, even when pre-occupied with these ambitions, he does not forget two great lessons of the Parnassian School. He has the accusing conscience of the genuine artist, who spares no pains and neglects no resources to express his conceptions with the utmost perfection of language and harmony of versification. He treats his scientific or philosophical subjects, not with the lofty vagueness of Victor Hugo, but with the mathematical precision and exactitude of the *École Polytechnique*. Yet the philosophical poetry of his later life, fine though it is in its intention and severity, is too fluent to require the labour of translation. He is at his best in the verse of his youthful period. It is mainly from this part of his work that the following poems are selected.



EVENING

\* We wandered down, at break of day,  
A narrow path—heart close to heart ;  
At noon, upon the world's highway,  
I walk to right, you left—apart.

No more we share one sky together.  
How bright is yours ! How black is mine !  
Your choice is still the sunniest weather,  
I keep the side where nought will shine.

Where'er you walk, gleams round you play—  
The very sand has diamond beads ;  
No beams e'er light with gladdening ray  
The cold grey soil my footstep treads.

Bird-songs and whispers full of sweets,  
Caressing, woo your heart and ear ;  
Your hair the breeze, adoring, greets ;  
Your lip the bee, entranced, draws near.

And I—I can but sing and sigh ;  
My heart's deep wound is ill at ease ;  
From leaf-hid nests the fondling cry  
Disturbs me more than it can please.

But, love ! a sky for ever bright  
May make too keen our mortal joy ;  
The air's embrace has too much might ;  
The incense e'en of flowers may cloy.

LE SOIR

A l'aube, la main dans la main,  
Nous suivions une allée étroite ;  
A midi, sur le grand chemin,  
Je marche à gauche, vous à droite.

Nous n'avons plus un ciel pareil,  
Le vôtre est brillant, le mien  
sombre ;  
Vous avez choisi le soleil,  
J'ai gardé le côté de l'ombre.

Le jour vous rit, et sur vos pas  
Le sable fin se diamante ;

Le jour pour moi n'enrichit pas  
Le sol gris que mon pied tour-  
mente.

Les chants d'oiseaux et les aveux  
Vous charment le cœur et l'oreille,  
La brise flatte vos cheveux,  
Et vos lèvres tentent l'abeille.

Et moi par de vaines chansons  
J'attise dans mon cœur la plaie,  
Le cri des nids dans les buissons  
M'attriste plus qu'il ne m'égale.

Mais, ô mon amie, un ciel clair  
Est de trop d'ivresse prodigue ;  
La caresse éparse de l'air,  
L'encens même des fleurs fatigue ;

Then yearns the soul for that calm rest  
 That laps us round at close of day,  
 With half-shut eye, on some fond breast,  
 To watch life's fever ebb away.

Will you not come and take your seat  
 By that high-way at evening fall?  
 I'll wait you there. We two shall meet  
 Where one deep shadow wraps it all.

On sent dans l'âme un cher repos  
 Descendre avec le jour qui baisse,  
 On cherche un appui, l'œil mi-clos,  
 La voile des désirs s'affaisse.

Ne viendrez vous pas vous asseoir  
 Sur le bord obscur de la route,  
 Où je vous attendrai le soir,  
 Quand l'ombre la couvrira toute?

### BLUE EYES OR BLACK

Blue eyes or black—all loved and all so bright,  
 A thousand eyes that saw the kindling dawn!  
 Sleeping, they hide within the grave their light;  
 But still the sun uprising greets each morn.

Oh! nights, that e'en than days were sweeter far,  
 A thousand eyes ye once could make more bright;  
 In heav'n is shining, still undimmed, each star,  
 But on those eyes there broods unfathomed night.

Ah! has their glance for ever lost its beam?  
 Nay, dream not such a change can truly be.  
 On other worlds they have but turned their gleam—  
 Those worlds that are invisible to thee;

For as at times we miss the starry light,  
 Yet know it shines beyond our ken on high,  
 So those dear eyes sleep on in earthly night,  
 Yet are in truth not dead and cannot die.

### LES YEUX

Bleus ou noirs, tous aimés, tous  
 beaux,  
 Des yeux sans nombre ont vu  
 l'aurore;  
 Ils dorment au fond des tombeaux  
 Et le soleil se lève encore.

Les nuits, plus douces que les jours,  
 Ont enchanté des yeux sans  
 nombre;  
 Les étoiles brillent toujours  
 Et les yeux se sont remplis d'ombre.

Oh! qu'ils aient perdu le re-  
 gard,  
 Non, non, cela n'est pas pos-  
 sible!

Ils se sont tournés quelque part  
 Vers ce qu'on nomme l'invisible:

Et comme les astres penchants  
 Nous quittent, mais au ciel  
 demeurent,  
 Les prunelles ont leurs couchants,  
 Mais il n'est pas vrai qu'ils  
 meurent.

Blue eyes or black—all loved and all so dear—  
Opened to meet some dawn of glorious rays,  
On worlds that lie beyond the grave's chill blight  
Those eyes we closed still bend their deathless gaze.

Bleus ou noirs, tous aimés, tous beaux, Ouverts à quelque immense aurore,	De l'autre côté des tombeaux Les yeux qu'on ferme voient encore.
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# THE DEATH-AGONY

Ye who will watch me when my end draws near,  
Speak not, I pray!  
'Twill help me most some music faint to hear,  
Then pass away.

For song can loosen, link by link, each care  
From Life's hard chain.  
So gently rock my griefs; but, oh! beware!  
To speak were pain.

I'm weary of all words; their wisest speech  
Can nought reveal;  
Give me the spirit-sounds minds cannot reach,  
But hearts can feel:

Some melody which all my soul shall steep,  
As tranced I lie,  
Passing from visions wild to dreamy sleep,  
—And, sleeping, die.

## L'AGONIE

Vous qui m'aidez dans mon  
agonie,

Ne me dites rien;  
Faites que j'entende un peu d'har-  
monie,  
Et je mourrai bien.

La musique apaise, enchante et  
délie

Des choses d'en bas:  
Bercez ma douleur; je vous en  
supplie,  
Ne lui parlez pas.

Je suis las des mots, je suis las  
d'entendre  
Ce qui peut mentir;

J'aime mieux les sons qu'au lieu  
de comprendre  
Je n'ai qu'à sentir:

Une mélodie où l'âme se plonge  
Et qui, sans effort,  
Me fera passer du délire au  
songe,  
Du songe à la mort.

Vous qui m'aidez dans mon  
agonie,  
Ne me dites rien,  
Pour allègement un peu d'har-  
monie  
Me fera grand bien

## 324 SOME MODERN FRENCH POETS

Ye who will watch me when my end draws near,  
     Speak not, I pray!  
 Some sounds of music murmuring in my ear  
     Will soothe my way.

My nurse, poor shepherdess! I'd bid you seek;  
     Tell her my whim;  
 I want her near me, when I'm faint and weak  
     On the grave's brim.

I want to hear her sing ere I depart,  
     Just once again,  
 In one low simple note to touch the heart  
     That old-world strain.

You'll find her still; the rustic hovel gives  
     Calm hopes and fears;  
 But in this world of mine one rarely lives  
     Thrice twenty years.

Be sure you leave us with our hearts alone,  
     Only us two!  
 She'll sing to me in her old trembling tone,  
     Stroking my brow.

She only to the end will love through all  
     My good and ill;  
 So will the air of those old songs recall  
     My first years still.

<p>Vous irez chercher ma pauvre              nourrice,              Qui mène un troupeau,          Et vous lui direz que c'est un              caprice,              Au bord du tombeau,          D'entendre chanter, tout bas, de              sa bouche,              Un air d'autrefois,          Simple et monotone, un doux air              qui touche              Avec peu de voix.</p> <p>Vous la trouverez: les gens des              chaumières              Vivent très longtemps;</p>	<p>Et je suis d'un monde où l'on ne              vit guères              Plusieurs fois vingt ans.</p> <p>Vous nous laisserez tous les deux              ensemble:              Nos cœurs s'uniront;          Elle chantera d'un accent qui              tremble,              La main sur mon front.</p> <p>Lors elle sera peut-être la seule              Qui m'aime toujours,          Et je m'en irai dans son chant              d'aïeule              Vers mes premiers jours,</p>
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And, dreaming thus, I shall not feel at last  
 My heart-strings torn,  
 But, all unknowing, the great barriers past,  
 Die,—as we're born.

Ye who will watch me when my end draws near,  
 Speak not, I pray !  
 'Twill help me most some music faint to hear,  
 Then pass away.

Pour ne pas sentir, à ma dernière	Vous qui m'aidez dans mon
heure,	agonie,
Que mon cœur se fend.	Ne me dites rien ;
Pour ne plus penser, pour que	Faites que j'entende un peu
l'homme meure	d'harmonie,
Comme est né l'enfant.	Et je mourrai bien.

### CHILDS-PLAY

My lady ! you were little then :  
 Twelve years were mine ;  
 Soon forgotten were your lovers,  
 All left to pine.

When we played among the others,  
 You still I sought ;  
 When small hands were intertwining  
 'Twas yours I caught.

As in gold and purple glory,  
 Poised o'er the rose,  
 Tells the butterfly his story,  
 All his heart glows ;

Leaf by leaf, still nearer drawing,  
 Is yet too shy  
 All the honey-dew to gather  
 She holds so nigh.

### ENFANTILLAGE

Madame, vous étiez petite,  
 J'avais douze ans ;  
 Vous oubliez vos courtisans  
 Bien vite !

Je ne voyais que vous au jeu  
 Parmi les autres ;  
 Mes doigts frôlaient parfois les  
 vôtres  
 Un peu. . .

Comme à la première visite  
 Faite au rosier,  
 Le papillon sans appuyer  
 Palpite,

Et de feuille en feuille, hésitant,  
 S'approche, et n'ose  
 Monter droit au miel que la rose  
 Lui tend,

So my heart was yearning wildly  
 Your lips to press;  
 'Twas your slender fingers only  
 I dared caress.

Through me thrilled a sudden rapture,  
 Ah! was it woe;  
 What made joy and pain foregather?  
 Love—long ago.

Twelve years only—and a lover!  
 'Tis not common.  
 You too, lady, were you feeling  
 Like a woman?

Did there come some thought bewildering  
 As, half afraid,  
 With your frock and with your dolly  
 You stood and played?

If I praised—too soon a poet—  
 Your tiny feet,  
 Too soon fair, you leant and touched me  
 With magic sweet.

I at least have ne'er forgotten  
 That eventide,  
 When we set up house together,  
 Bridegroom and bride.

Gems you dreamed of, I dreamed over  
 My vow to you!  
 Both were older than our years were,  
 Both different too!

Tremblant de ses premières fièvres,  
 Mon cœur n'osait  
 Voler droit des doigts qu'il baisait  
 Aux lèvres.

Je sentais en moi tour à tour  
 Plaisir et peine,  
 Un mélange d'aise et de gêne :  
 L'amour.

L'amour à douze ans! Oui,  
 madame,  
 Et vous aussi,  
 N'aviez-vous pas quelque souci  
 De femme?

Vous faisiez beaucoup d'embarras  
 Très occupée

De votre robe, une poupée  
 Au bras.

Si j'adorais, trop tôt poète,  
 Vos petits pieds,  
 Trop tôt belle, vous me courbiez  
 La tête.

Nous menâmes si bien, un soir,  
 Le badinage,  
 Que nous nous mîmes en ménage  
 Pour voir.

Vous parliez des bijoux de noces,  
 Moi du serment,  
 Car nous étions différemment  
 Précoces.

We played at the dance and dinner,—  
 You wished it so,—  
 Said that proper weddings must have  
 Some pomp and show.

You enjoyed it as a pastime,  
 I thought it true,  
 Told my love aloud, and whispered  
 "Dearest" to you.

On your cheek I ventured, dreaming,  
 One kiss to leave.  
 Play for me has all been over  
 Since that spring eve.

On fit la dinette, on dansa ;	J'osai vous appeler tout haut :
Vous prétendites	Chérie,
Qu'il n'est noces proprement dites	Et je vous ai (car je rêvais)
Sans ça.	Baisé la joue ;
Vous goûtiez la plaisanterie	Depuis ce soir-là je ne joue
Tant que bientôt	Jamais.

## PILGRIMAGES

\* Still remembering, wandering on,  
 Vanished days of love I crave,  
 Sweetest dreams my heart has known,—  
 I can only find your grave.

Though each year we fade and falter,  
 Our young loves no ageing know,  
 As that child's face cannot alter  
 Which we wept o'er long ago.

Let us lift the lids close-pressing  
 On our dear ones' languid eyes.  
 Ah ! their glance has no caressing ;  
 Stern they lie in stony guise.

## PÉLÉRINAGES

En souvenir je m'aventure,  
 Vers les jours passés où j'aimais,  
 Pour visiter la sépulture  
 Des rêves que mon cœur a faits.

Cependant qu'on vieillit sans cesse,  
 Les amours ont toujours vingt  
 ans,

Jeunes de la fixe jeunesse  
 Des enfants qu'on pleure long-  
 temps.

Je soulève un peu les paupières  
 De ces chers et douloureux  
 morts ;

Leurs yeux sont froids comme  
 des pierres  
 Avec des regards toujours forts.

They attract me, yet repel;  
 Through these years of parting sore  
 Faith to them I've guarded well;  
 Ah! they know me now no more.  
 I'm changed in brow, I'm changed in heart;  
 And they dread the farewell sneer,  
 Wherewith the agèd bid depart  
 Their youthful visions, once so dear.  
 I stand, with love and pity rife,  
 Yet dare not bend me o'er their tomb;  
 My kiss might warm them back to life,  
 And theirs has been so full of gloom.

Leur grâce m'attire et m'opprime, En dépit des ans révolus, Je leurai gardé ma tendresse; Ils ne me reconnaîtraient plus:	Que font les hommes de mon âge Aux premiers rêves de leur cœur, Et moi, plein de pitié, j'hésite, J'ai peur qu'en se posant sur eux Mon baiser ne les ressuscite: Ils ont été trop malheureux.
J'ai changé d'âme et de visage; Ils redoutent l'adieu moqueur	

## BY THE WATER'S EDGE

To sit and watch the wavelets as they flow,  
 Two,—side by side;  
 To see the gliding clouds that come and go,  
 And mark them glide;  
 If from low roofs the smoke is wreathing pale,  
 To watch it wreathe;  
 If flowers around breathe perfume on the gale,  
 To feel them breathe;  
 If the bee sips the honeyed fruit that glistens,  
 To sip the dew;  
 If the bird warbles while the forest listens,  
 To listen too;

AU BORD DE L'EAU S'asseoir tous deux au bord d'un flot qui passe, Le voir passer; Tous deux, s'il glisse un nuage en l'espace, Le voir glisser; A l'horizon, s'il fume un toit de chaume, Le voir fumer;	Aux alentours si quelque fleur embaume, S'en embaumer; Si quelque fruit, où les abeilles goûtent, Tente, y goûter; Si quelque oiseau, dans les bois qui l'écoutent, Chante, écouter.
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Beneath the willow where the brook is singing  
 To hear its song,  
 Nor feel, while round us that sweet dream is clinging,  
 The hours too long ;  
 To know one only deep o'ermastering passion,  
 The love we share ;  
 To let the world go worrying in its fashion  
 Without one care ;  
 We only, while around all weary grow,  
 Unwearied stand,  
 And, midst the fickle changes others know,  
 Love—hand in hand.

Entendre au pied du saule où l'eau murmure	Sans nul souci des querelles du monde,
L'eau murmurer ;	Les ignorer ;
Ne pas sentir, tant que ce rêve dure,	Et seuls, heureux devant tout ce qui lasse,
Le temps durer ;	Sans se lasser,
Mais n'apportant de passion pro- fonde	Sentir l'amour, devant tout ce qui passe,
Qu'à s'adorer,	Ne point passer !

### THE ONE THING THAT LASTS.

How cold and wan the present lowers  
 O my true love ! around us twain ;  
 How little of the past is ours !  
 How changed the friends who yet remain !  
 We cannot without envying view  
 The eyes with twenty summers gay,  
 For eyes, 'neath which our childhood grew,  
 Have long since passed from earth away.  
 Each hour still steals our youth ; alas !  
 No hour will e'er the theft restore ;  
 One thing there is that will not pass,—  
 The heart I loved thee with of yore.

### CE QUI DURE

Le présent se fait vide et triste,  
 O mon amie, autour de nous ;  
 Combien peu du passé subsiste !  
 Et ceux qui restent changent tous.  
 Nous ne voyons plus sans envie  
 Les yeux de vingt ans resplendir,

Et combien sont déjà sans vie  
 Des yeux qui nous ont vu  
 grandir !

Que de jeunesse emporte l'heure,  
 Qui n'en rapporte jamais rien !  
 Pourtant quelque chose demeure :  
 Je t'aime avec mon cœur ancien,

That heart which plays in life its part,  
 With love elate, with loss forlorn,  
 Is still—through all—the child's pure heart  
 My mother gave when I was born.

That heart, where nothing new can light,  
 Where old thoughts draw their cherish'd breath,  
 It loves thee, dear, with all the might  
 That life can wield in strife with death.

If it of death the conqueror be,  
 If there's in man some nobler part  
 That wins him immortality,  
 Then, love! thou hast that deathless heart.

Mon vrai cœur, celui qui s'attache  
 Et souffre depuis qu'il est né,  
 Mon cœur d'enfant, le cœur sans  
 tache  
 Que ma mère m'avait donné ;

Ce cœur où plus rien ne pénètre,  
 D'où plus rien désormais ne sort ;

Je t'aime avec ce que mon être  
 A de plus fort contre la mort ;

Et, s'il peut braver la mort  
 même,

Si le meilleur de l'homme est tel  
 Que rien n'en périsse, je t'aime  
 Avec ce que j'ai d'immortel.

## A PRAYER

If you but knew the tears that fall  
 For life unloved and fireside drear,  
 Perchance before my lonely hall  
 You would pass near.

If you but knew your power to thrill  
 My drooping soul by one pure glance,  
 You'd look towards my window-sill  
 At times—by chance.

If you but knew what soothing balm  
 One heart can on another pour,  
 Would you not sit—a sister calm—  
 Beside my door?

## PRIÈRE

Ah ! si vous saviez comme on pleure  
 De vivre seul et sans foyers,  
 Quelquefois devant ma demeure  
 Vous passeriez,

Si vous saviez ce que fait naître  
 Dans l'âme triste un pur regard,

Vous regarderiez ma fenêtre  
 Comme au hasard.

Si vous saviez quel baume apport  
 Au cœur la présence d'un cœur,  
 Vous vous assoiriez sous ma porte  
 Comme une sœur.

And if you knew I loved you well,  
 And loved you too with all my heart,  
 You'd come perchance with me to dwell,  
 And ne'er depart.

Si vous saviez que je vous aime,  
 Surtout si vous saviez comment,

Vous entreriez peut-être même  
 Tout simplement.

In the best of his work Sully is engaged in analysing and recording his own experiences and sensations. He is essentially a subjective poet;—the mirror which reflects the fugitive lights and shades that flicker over the human heart. In François Coppée, on the other hand, the narrative and dramatic elements predominate. He passes out of himself, as it were, to observe the external world, to narrate stories of action, to paint scenes in the drama of real life. While he has remained true to the vital traditions of the Parnassian group, he has yet created a manner for himself. He has the rashness as well as the courage of the innovator. In the frank realism of his pictures of everyday life among the Parisian shopkeepers, clerks, and artisans, he sometimes, like Wordsworth, oversteps the border-line between poetry and prose. But each thought is expressed in easy rhythm and in clear, direct, natural language; each detail of the scene is honestly observed, correctly drawn, carefully finished.

The distinctive features of Coppée's verse were moulded by the circumstances of his childhood and early life. Born in Paris in 1842, Coppée, alone among the poets already mentioned, is still alive. Of his father, a poorly paid War Office

clerk, whose whole soul was bowed to duty, he has painted a portrait in his autobiographical poem of "Olivier." To his mother's life of constraint and self-sacrifice he pays a thinly-veiled tribute in his "Sainte" (*Le Reliquaire*). François was their youngest child. A delicate boy, he had neither health nor inclination for sustained study at the Lycée St. Louis. He came to school with a sprig of lilac pressed into his grammar, and a ringing stanza of Alfred de Musset confounded with his Greek declensions. His training was acquired not in the class-room, but in real life. The discipline came early enough. Before he was twenty-one, his father's death left his mother and unmarried sister dependent on his earnings as a clerk. It was his dream to be a poet. Poor in pocket, rich in hope, he kept the end steadily in view, practising his art, continuing his studies, and eking out his meagre salary with copying or journalistic work. Between 1864 and 1869 he had published four slender volumes of verse. In January of the latter year his play, "Le Passant," was produced at the Odéon. It made him famous. The *blasé* taste of the decrepit Empire was fascinated by the virgin freshness of the little one-act dialogue: newspapers published every detail of the author's life; cravats à la *Coppée* became the fashion. The Franco-Prussian war checked his success. The greatness of the national disaster drove Sully inwards; it forced Coppée outwards. It strengthened Sully's tendency to strenuous

seriousness ; it encouraged Coppée's inclination towards narrative and dramatic verse. Told off to do sentry-duty on the ramparts of Paris, shut up within its walls during the siege, an eye-witness to the horrors of the Commune, and, after peace was restored, struggling hard to gain his livelihood, he gives a vivid transcript of what he sees and feels at his own door. He learnt that, if the sympathy is genuine, and the feeling truthfully expressed, there is poetry in the grocer's shop. To describe, in Parisian French, life as homely and familiar as that which Jasmin describes in the patois of Agen, is Coppée's gift.

Born in Paris of Parisian parents, Coppée is a "Parisien Parisiennant," a Parisian of Parisians. Paris is his native place, his home, his mistress. Her streets were the stage of his humble tragedies ; each stone in her pavements was an acquaintance ; at every corner an association greeted him ; out of every alley flitted some phantom of his youth ; her plane-trees sheltered alike his first rhymes and his first loves. Paris was to him a personal living being. He loved to seek her outskirts, and thence to distinguish the various sounds which unite in the hum of her busy life ; to catch her tired sigh of relief as twilight creeps across the sky ; to watch her lights burst out, one by one, through the gathering darkness. He did not celebrate the glories of her great streets and palaces ; but he dedicated his genius to sing of the weak and forlorn, the pariahs of gay society, the obscure

heroes and unknown heroines whom his pity detected among the newsvendors, nurses, grocers, and motherless child-mothers. None had treated Parisian life in Coppée's distinctive vein. Literary Frenchmen, for the most part, were soldiers of fortune from the provinces, who sought Paris as the stage for the pursuit of fame; they studied her Bohemianism as material for copy, and despised her respectability. To Coppée, on the other hand, Paris was home. He was the poet of its solid, unostentatious virtues; the singer of the great, industrious, frugal, domestic city, which underlies the brilliant Paris of society, of novelists, and of politicians.

Coppée has written in many moods. There is his love poetry; there are the poems inspired by the scenes of the great war; there are the *genre* pictures of domestic life, painted, for the most part, on too large a canvas for illustrative purposes; there are, finally, the poems which show his directness and graphic force of narrative. Of these various moods, the following verses are examples:

#### TO A GIRL ENGAGED

\* She like you had golden hair,  
 She, whose eyes so soft and fair  
 Left my heart all desolate;  
 Yet I'm glad, in my despair,  
 For your wooing's happier fate.

POUR UNE FIANCÉE

A M<sup>LE</sup>. ALICE G.

Elle était blonde comme vous,  
 Celle dont les yeux fins et doux

Me laissèrent l'âme blessée.

Pourtant mon cœur n'est pas  
 jaloux

De vos bonheurs de fiancée.

Why should grief our spirits sour ?  
All she gave was but one flower ;  
Yet when lovers twain pass by,  
I can pray, " God on them shower  
Joy for all my misery."

Though he's severed now from you,  
Yet your lover knows you true,  
And he sorrows when you weep.  
Did *they* weep,—I never knew,—  
Those sweet eyes of violet deep ?

Let me make one humble vow ;  
As I loved, may he love now !  
Take the secret I confide.  
Grief my soul must ever bow ;  
Lifelong joy be at your side !

Honte à ceux qu'aigrit la douleur !  
Je n'ai rien d'elle qu'une fleur ;  
Mais quand un couple d'amants  
<sup>passé,</sup>  
Je dis au bon Dieu : " Rendez-leur  
En félicité ma disgrâce."

Bien qu'il soit de vous séparé,  
Votre ami se sent désiré ;

Il est triste comme vous l'êtes.  
Moi, j'ignore s'ils ont pleuré,  
Les charmants yeux de violettes.

Qu'on vous aime comme j'aimais,  
C'est le vœu que je me permets,  
Le secret que je vous confie.  
J'ai de la peine pour jamais ;  
Soyez heureuse pour la vie !

## THE BURNT COTTAGE

\* With swift and devastating stroke,  
The battle swept along this way,  
And the old house in ashes lay ;  
Look close ! you still can see the smoke.

Some prints from Épinal hung there,  
A gun swung from the chimney hook ;  
The cabin wore defiant look,  
As though the foes of France to dare.

## LA CHAUMIÈRE INCENDIÉE

*Pour l'œuvre du Sou des  
chaumières.*

Fléau rapide et qui dévore,  
La bataille a passé par là,

Et la vieille maison brûla ;  
Regardez, cela fume encore.  
Quelques images d'Épinal,  
Un fusil sur la cheminée ;  
C'était la chaumière obstinée,  
Le vieux logis national.

You stumbled on the threshold rough ;  
 So low the door, you had to stoop ;  
 But on the fire there smoked the soup,  
 Upon the shelf was bread enough.

'Twas dark and small, by time defaced ;  
 The roof of oaten-thatch was made ;  
 Yet, nestling in the alcove's shade,  
 By the big bed a cot was placed.

The spider with her lace of grey  
 Across the ceiling used to sprawl ;  
 But in the chinks of that old wall  
 The twitt'ring swallows loved to play  
 Outside the door, at summer tide,  
 In winter, by the fireside glow,  
 The dwellers in that cottage low  
 Knew yesterday both joy and pride.

Against the storm a shield it made ;  
 The children grew and flourished there ;  
 The grandsire, when the noon was fair,  
 Could bask beneath the trellis shade.

They talked, in worldly ways unlearned,  
 On which good girl they would decide  
 To be the conscript-brother's bride,  
 When he from soldiers' camp returned.

Now,—past that home has swept the war ;  
 Since those accursèd Germans came.  
 These ruins, black with smoke and flame,  
 Stand where the cabin stood before.

Au seuil rugueux où l'on trébuche,  
 Il fallait se baisser un peu ;  
 Mais la soupe était sur le feu  
 Et le pain était dans la huche.  
 C'était bien sombre et bien petit,  
 Avec un toit de paille chauve,  
 Mais abritant sous l'humble alcôve  
 Un berceau tout près d'un grand  
 lit.

L'araignée aux grises dentelles  
 Habitait le plafond obscur ;  
 Mais les trous nombreux du vieux  
 mur  
 Étaient connus des hirondelles.  
 L'été, sur la porte, et l'hiver,  
 Près du foyer plein de lumière,

Les habitants de la chaumière  
 Étaient encore heureux hier.

C'était l'abri contre l'orage ;  
 Là, les enfants avaient grandi ;  
 L'aïeul se chauffait à midi  
 Sur le banc qu'une treille ombrage.

Et l'on parlait naïvement  
 De choisir une brave fille  
 Pour le frère de la famille  
 Qui revenait du régiment.

—Maintenant, c'est après la  
 guerre,  
 Après ces Allemands damnés ;  
 Et ces pans de murs calcinés  
 Furent cette maison naguère.



The grandsire asks for alms to-day ;  
He who, though only rich in heart,  
Cut always of his loaf a part  
For beggars tramping by the way.

The son's by toil for wages bent ;  
Yet his young wife and children twain,  
Crouched in one squalid room, complain  
That they must starve to pay the rent.

The brother, still to fame unknown,—  
They sent him to the war again,  
Not to return : on sunless plain,  
And German soil, he died—alone.

But since our noble France will keep  
For ever, as she kept of old,  
Her pence, her silver coin, her gold,  
To dry the tears of those that weep,

Oh, then, by that sad past we've known,  
Give now, give all, with open hand,  
Give for those homes that wasted stand,  
Give for those cradles overthrown.

L'aïeul aujourd'hui tend la main,  
Lui qui, n'étant pourtant pas  
riche,

Coupait largement dans la niche  
Pour tous les pauvres du chemin.

L'homme travaille dans les fermes,  
Et sa femme et ses deux petits  
Pleurent dans un affreux tandis  
Dont il ne peut payer les termes.

Le frère, soldat inconnu  
Qu'on a repris pour la campagne,

Du fond de la froide Allemagne  
N'est, hélas ! jamais revenu.

—Mais, puisque dans la noble  
France

Il fut toujours, il reste encor,  
Sou, pièce blanche ou louis d'or,  
Une obole pour la souffrance,

Au nom du douloureux passé,  
Donnez tous, donnez tout de suite,  
Donnez pour la maison détruite  
Et pour le berceau renversé !

## THE NOVICE

\* When from her heart regret's wild pang had died,  
And sunk for her Hope's last deceiving ray,  
She sought within the convent's shade to hide  
And through its calm to learn the heavenward way.

### LA SŒUR NOVICE

Lorsque tout douloureux regret fut  
mort en elle  
Et qu'elle eut bien perdu tout  
espoir décevant,

Résignée, elle alla chercher dans  
un couvent  
Le calme qui prépare à la vie  
éternelle.

Her beads were dancing on her rough serge dress,  
 As, thin and pale, she trod the garden walk :  
 There gleam no flowers ; but there no winds distress.  
 Some kale grew there,—a vine with trellised stalk.  
 One day she plucked, within that garden drear,  
 A flower, with mem'ries worldly, yet too dear,  
 Still linked ; it bloomed where saintly law forbade.  
 She breathed it long, and then, at eventide,  
 Calmly—her soul in holy peace arrayed—  
 As heavenward dies the incense, so she died.

Le chapelet battant la jupe de flanelle,	Une fleur exhalant un souvenir mondain,
Et pâle, elle venait se promener souvent	Qui poussait là malgré la sainte obédience ;
Dans le jardin sans fleurs, bien abrité du vent,	Elle la respira longtemps, puis, vers le soir,
Avec ses plants de choux et sa vigne en tonnelle.	Saintement, ayant mis en paix sa conscience,
Pourtant elle cueillit un jour, dans ce jardin,	Mourut, comme s'éteint l'âme d'un encensoir.

The scene of "The Blessing" is a Convent Church during the capture of Saragossa by the French in 1812. The monks who defended the convent have been shot down ; the soldiers pour into the courtyard. One of the victorious party describes the scene ;—

Behind, the Church its sombre depths displayed ;  
 Like golden stars the tapers lit the shade ;  
 In perfumed wreaths the languid incense burned ;  
 And in the choir, towards the altar turned,  
 As though no sound of battle reached him there,  
 A priest, erect and tall, with snow-white hair.  
 In peaceful, rev'rent calm was saying mass.

#### LA BÉNÉDICTION

Et, derrière, s'ouvrait l'église, im- mense et sombre.	Et, tout au fond, tourné vei l'autel, dans le chœur,
Les cierges étoilaient de points d'or toute l'ombre ;	Comme s'il n'avait pas entendu la bataille,
L'encens y répandait son parfum de langueur ;	Un prêtre en cheveux blancs et de très haute taille
	Terminait son office avec tran- quillité

That scene still haunts me; it can never pass  
 From mem'ry; as I speak, I see it all,—  
 The convent church, with Moorish western wall,  
 Monks' brown-robed corpses, and the sun's bright gleam  
 That made their red blood on the pavement steam;  
 Through the low door,—set as in picture frame,—  
 Priest, lighted altar—its high shrine all flame,—  
 Ourselves. Nailed to the spot, we did not dare  
 Advance; no comrade in the ranks could swear  
 More godless oaths than I; in one attack,  
 When orders came for us some church to sack,  
 The story runs, to prove my ribald wit,  
 From burning altar lights my pipe I lit;  
 I knew all tricks of old campaigner's trade;  
 My moustached lip by downward curl betrayed  
 True outward sign of cold blaspheming sneer.  
 —Yet that white-haired old man thrilled me with fear.  
 “Fire,” cried an officer.

None moved. The priest  
 (He must have heard, yet never blenched the least)  
 Holding the sacrament, turned round his face  
 (For in the mass he just had reached the place,  
 Where priests pronounce the blessing on the rite);  
 With outstretched arms, like angel's pinions white,

Ce mauvais souvenir si présent  
 m'est resté  
 Qu'en vous le racontant je crois  
 tout revoir presque :  
 Le vieux couvent avec sa façade  
 moresque,  
 Les grands cadavres bruns des  
 moines, le soleil  
 Faisant sur les pavés fumer le sang  
 vermeil,  
 Et, dans l'encadrement noir de la  
 porte basse,  
 Ce prêtre et cet autel brillant  
 comme une châsse,  
 Et nous autres cloués au sol,  
 presque poltrons.

Certes, j'étais alors un vrai sac à  
 jurons,  
 Un impie; et plus d'un encore se  
 rappelle  
 Qu'on me vit une fois, au sac d'une  
 chapelle,  
 Pour faire le gentil et le spirituel,

Allumer une pipe aux cierges de  
 l'autel.  
 Déjà j'étais un vieux traîneur de  
 sabretache;  
 Et le pli que donnait ma lèvre à  
 ma moustache  
 Annonçait un blasphème et n'était  
 pas trompeur.  
 —Mais ce vieil homme était si  
 blanc qu'il me fit peur.  
 “Feu!” dit un officier.

Nul ne bougea. Le prêtre  
 Entendit, à coup sûr, mais n'en fit  
 rien paraître,  
 Et nous fit face avec son grand  
 saint sacrement,  
 Car sa messe en était arrivée au  
 moment  
 Où le prêtre se tourne et bénit les  
 fidèles.  
 Ses bras levés avaient une en-  
 vergure d'ailes.  
 Et chacun recula, lorsqu'avec  
 l'ostensoir

He waved the monstrance ; backward each man drew ;  
 He traced the cross in air, and well we knew  
 He feared no more than if we worshipped there ;  
 In firm rich voice he chaunted forth the prayer,  
 As priests are wont to sing their *Oremus*,  
 Said,

“ *Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus.*”

“Fire,” cried the voice again, “or I’ll report  
 You all.” A soldier, but of coward sort,  
 Took aim and fired ; the old man’s face grew pale,  
 But his undaunted bearing did not quail,  
 Rather it grew more lofty, stern yet glad,  
 “*Pater et Filius.*”

Was the wretch mad ?  
 Or did some rush of blood to brutal brain  
 Bid ring from out our ranks that shot again ?  
 I know not ; anyhow the shot was sent.  
 The monk one hand upon the altar leant  
 And tried to bless ; as for support he clung,  
 His left the heavy golden monstrance swung ;  
 A third time traced in air the cross to tell  
 Of pardon ; then in voice that faintly fell  
 Yet clear, for even breath was hushed in us,  
 Said, with closed eyes,

“ *Et Spiritus Sanctus,*”

Il décrivit la croix dans l’air et  
 qu’on put voir  
 Qu’il ne tremblait pas plus que  
 devant les dévotes.  
 Et quand sa belle voix, psalmodiant  
 les notes,  
 Comme font les curés dans tous  
 leurs *Oremus*,  
 Dit :  
*Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus,*  
 “Fen !” répéta la voix féroce,  
 “ou je me fâche.”  
 Alors un d’entre nous, un soldat,  
 mais un lâche,  
 Abaisse son fusil et fit fen. Le  
 vieillard  
 Devint très pâle, mais, sans baisser  
 son regard  
 Etincelant d’un sombre et farouche  
 courage :  
*Pater et Filius*, reprit-il.

Quelle rage  
 Ou quel voile de sang affolant un  
 cerveau  
 Fit partir de nos rangs un coup de  
 feu nouveau ?  
 Je ne sais ; mais pourtant cette  
 action fut faite.  
 Le moine, d’une main s’appuyant  
 sur le faite  
 De l’autel et tâchant de nous béurr  
 encor,  
 De l’autre souleva le lourd osten-  
 soir d’or.  
 Pour la troisième fois il traça dans  
 l’espace  
 Le signe du pardon, et d’une voix  
 très basse,  
 Mais qu’on entendit bien, car tous  
 bruits s’étaient tus,  
 Il dit, les yeux fermés :

*Et Spiritus sanctus*

And dropped down dead, ending his life with prayer.  
 Three times the monstrance on the altar stair  
 Bounded. Rough troopers stood, by pity thrilled,  
 With grounded arms, and hearts with horror filled,  
 Their souls before this murdered martyr bowed.  
 "Amen!" a drummer said, and laughed aloud!

Puis tomba mort, ayant achevé sa prière.	Sombres, l'horreur vivante au cœur et l'arme aux pieds,
L'ostensoir rebondit par trois fois sur la pierre,	Devant ce meurtre infâme et devant ce martyr :
Et, comme nous restions, même les vieux troupiers,	<i>Amen !</i> dit un tambour en éclatant de rire.



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